Old Testament Introduction
The Bible’s Buried Secrets
Chapter 20, Karnak Wall Texts

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalTJzk4kO0>

***About the Video***

What is for the most part an exact copy of the video script follows. There are a few places where individual speakers could neither be heard nor understood: for this we apologize. Every effort was made to be precise: there were just spots that defeated us. Since this is a quote in its entirety it seemed unnecessary to mark it with quotation marks. The notation for each speaker is tedious enough: Narrator, Reader, etc. If you discover bothersome errors, please reply to this website and point them out. You may verify the script more easily by starting to replay it where the “time” stamps indicate discussion begins. The second of the above links is free from advertising and thus easier to use.

***Overview***

We rejected the BBS working hypothesis after showing evidentiary, logical, and scientific cause. We examined the Redford working hypothesis; found partial support for it; tentatively rejected it; yet with further evidence and reflection realized that it was correct from the point of the Egyptian political earthly perspective. Additional support for Redford was drawn from Genesis 36 and Psalm 105.

We also examined Astour’s claim for a widely dispersed Shasu existence. The only known group that fits the geographically dispersed and diverse behavior of the Shasu, is the extended family of Abraham, so this became a core element of our working hypothesis, by default.

Finally, we examined the Name, Yahweh, YHWH, or *Yhw*. We concluded that the origin of the name could not be determined from presently available evidence. Although, it would be nice to know the origin of the Name, it’s not essential: for we understand that He is eternally the Living God of the Universe, revealed as such to Abraham and all the patriarchs and matriarchs. Hence, the disclosure of the Name, was immediately offensive to Egyptians: for Yahweh was the God, above all gods, and He expected to be obeyed. The Egyptians were just not accustomed to obeying anybody else.

***Script***

Karnak Wall Texts (time 43:30)

Quote:

N: But Yahweh only appears in the Hebrew Bible, His name is nowhere to be found in Canaanite text or stories.[[1]](#endnote-1) So where do the Israelites find their God? The search for the origins of Yahweh leads scholars back to ancient Egypt. Here in the royal city of Karnak[[2]](#endnote-2) for over a thousand years, pharaohs celebrated their power with statues, obelisks, and carved murals on temple walls.

Redford: Here on the north wall of Karnak, we have scenes depicting the victories in battle of Seti Ⅰ,[[3]](#endnote-3) the father of Ramesses the Great. Seti here commemorates one of his greatest victories over the Shasu.[[4]](#endnote-4)

N: The Shasu[[5]](#endnote-5) were a people who lived in the deserts of southern Canaan, now Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia, around the same time as the Israelites emerged. Egyptian texts[[6]](#endnote-6) say one of the places where the Shasu lived is called Y-H-W, probably pronounced Yahu,[[7]](#endnote-7) likely the name of their patron god.[[8]](#endnote-8) That name Yahu is strangely similar to Yahweh, the name of the Israelite God.[[9]](#endnote-9) In the Bible the place where the Shasu lived is referred to as Midian.[[10]](#endnote-10) It is here, before the Exodus the Bible tells us Moses first encounters Yahweh in the form of a burning bush.

R: “Come no closer. Remove the sandals from your feet. For the place on which you are standing is holy ground. God also said to Moses, thus you shall say to the Israelites: YHWH the God of your ancestors… has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this My title for all generations.” — Exodus 3:5 and 15[[11]](#endnote-11)

Coogan: So we have in Egyptian sources something that appears to be a name like Yahweh in the vicinity of Midian.[[12]](#endnote-12) Here is Moses in Midian, and there a deity[[13]](#endnote-13) appears to him, and reveals his name to Moses as Yahweh.

N: These tantalizing connections are leading biblical scholars to reexamine the Exodus story. While there is no evidence to support a mass migration, some now believe that a small group did escape from Egypt.[[14]](#endnote-14) However, they were not Israelites, but rather Canaanite slaves.[[15]](#endnote-15) On their journey back to Canaan they passed through Midian, where they are inspired by stories of the Shasu’s god, Yahu.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Faust: They were probably a group of … who fled from Egypt and had some divine experience, probably a small group demographically, but it was important at least in ideology.[[17]](#endnote-17)

N: They find their way to the central hill country where they encounter the tribes who fled the Canaanite city-states. Their story of deliverance resonates in this emerging egalitarian society. The liberated slaves attribute their freedom to the God they met in Midian, who they now call Yahweh.[[18]](#endnote-18)

Meyers: They spread the word, to the highlanders, who themselves, perhaps, had escaped from the tyranny of the Canaanite city-states. They spread the idea of a god who represented freedom; freedom for people to keep the fruits of their own labor. This was a message that was so powerful that it brought people together and gave them a new kind of identity.[[19]](#endnote-19)

N: The identity of Israelites. They are a combination of disenfranchised Canaanites, runaway slaves from Egypt, and even nomads settling down. The Bible calls them a mixed multitude.[[20]](#endnote-20)

Dever: According to the Hebrew Bible, early Israel is a “motley crew.”[[21]](#endnote-21) And we know that’s the case now. But these people are bound together by a new vision. And I think the revolutionary spirit was probably there from the beginning.[[22]](#endnote-22)

N: The Chosen People may actually be people who chose to be free.[[23]](#endnote-23) Their story of escape, first told by word of mouth and poetry, helped forge a collective identity among the tribes.[[24]](#endnote-24) Later, when written down it will become a central theme of the Bible, exodus, and divine deliverance.[[25]](#endnote-25) Deliverance by a God who comes from Midian,[[26]](#endnote-26) exactly where the Bible says, adopted by the Israelites to represent their exodus from slavery to freedom.[[27]](#endnote-27) So is this the birth of monotheism?[[28]](#endnote-28)

Coogan: The common understanding[[29]](#endnote-29) of what differentiated the ancient Israelites from their neighbors was that their neighbors worshiped many different gods and goddesses and the Israelites worshiped only the one true God. But that is not the case.[[30]](#endnote-30)

N: This bull figurine, likely representing El, the chief god of the Canaanite peoples, is one of thousands of idols discovered in Israelite sites.[[31]](#endnote-31)

Coogan: The Israelites frequently worshipped other gods. Now, maybe they weren’t supposed to, but they did. So at least on a practical level many, if not most Israelites were not monotheists.[[32]](#endnote-32)

N: The Bible’s ideal of the Israelite worship of One God will have to wait. About two centuries pass, after the Merneptah Stele places the Israelites in Canaan.[[33]](#endnote-33) Families grow into tribes, the population increases.[[34]](#endnote-34) Then about 1000 BC, one of the Bible’s larger-than-life[[35]](#endnote-35) figures emerges to unite the twelve tribes of Israel against a powerful new enemy.[[36]](#endnote-36)

R: “David put his hand into the bag: he took out a stone and slung it. It struck the Philistine in the forehead: the stone sank into his forehead and he fell down on the ground.” — 1 Samuel 17:49

N: The Bible celebrates David as the shepherd boy who vanquishes the giant, Goliath; the lover who lusts after forbidden fruits; and the poet who composes lyric psalms still recited today. Of all the names in the Hebrew Bible, none appears more than David. Scriptures say, David creates a kingdom that stretches from Egypt to Mesopotamia. He makes Jerusalem his royal capital. And in a new covenant, Yahweh promises that he and his descendants will rule forever.[[37]](#endnote-37) David’s son, Solomon builds the Temple where Yahweh, now the national God of Israel,[[38]](#endnote-38) will dwell for eternity. The kingdom of David and Solomon, one nation, united under One God according to the Bible.

Dever: Now some sceptics today have argued there was no such thing as a united monarchy, that it’s a later Biblical construct, and particularly a construct of modern scholarship.[[39]](#endnote-39) In short, there was no David, as one of the Biblical revisionists have said, David is no more historical than King Arthur.

Unquote.

***BBS Hypothesis***

The BBS working hypothesis surfaced clearly in the previous time segment. The salient points of this working hypothesis are: 1. The Bible says one thing; archaeology says the opposite thing. 2. The Bible must be rejected in favor of archaeology. 3. Generally, there is no biblical historicity prior to 1010 BC, at best there are only historical kernels. 4. Specifically, there is no Exodus under Moses, and no Conquest under Joshua. 5. Rather, some unhappy Canaanites, primarily from Hazor, the largest city-state of the period, transition to becoming Israelites. 6. With this transition they create a false history and a false god to distinguish and separate themselves from other Canaanites. 7. On a parallel thread a few Canaanites drift through Midian where they pick up the name *sh3sw* for themselves, and the name *yhw* for their deity. 8. In the north, the migrating Canaanites mingle with the unhappy Canaanites; where, the deity name *yhw* becomes universally accepted, even though many other idols are retained among them, even a bride for *yhw*.

**Yahweh**

The opening statement, “Yahweh only appears in the Hebrew Bible”, is false for expressions like *t3 sh3sw yhw* (“the land of the Shasu of Yahweh”)[[40]](#endnote-40) are commonly found on Egyptian monuments associated with Seti Ⅰ (1290-1279 BC) at Karnak (which evidently omits the term *yhw*), and as far south as Soleb and Amarah-West, in association with Amenhotep Ⅲ (1388-1351 BC) and Ramesses Ⅱ (1279-1213 BC). A very common word like *t3*, meaning “the land” or “the land of” is found in numerous other contexts; the slightly-less common *sh3sw*, meaning the “Shasu” or “walkers” is also found in many places;[[41]](#endnote-41) not-quite-rare words like *yhw*, meaning Yahweh, are not so rare as to have much dispute about meaning. The Canaanites may not have known Yahweh, but the Egyptians almost certainly did.[[42]](#endnote-42)

“There are two Egyptian texts, one dated to the period of Amenophis Ⅲ [Amenhotep Ⅲ (1388-1351 BC)], the other to the age of Ramses Ⅱ [(1279-1213 BC)] which refer to ‘Yahu in the land of the Šosū-Bedouins’,(*t3 š3św jhw3*), in which Yahu is a toponym.[[43]](#endnote-43) Regarding the Shasu of Yhw, Michael Astour[[44]](#endnote-44) observed that the ‘hieroglyphic rendering corresponds very precisely to the Hebrew tetragrammaton YHWH, or Yahweh, and antedates the hitherto oldest occurrence of that Divine Name – on the Moabite Stone – by over five hundred years.’”[[45]](#endnote-45)

**Data**

The BBS working hypothesis must be rejected out of hand as unscientific because it begins by eliminating data. It also arbitrarily decides that some data is better than other data: in science, the induction must be formed by considering all of the data. Then BBS invents a false explanation from the reduced data set. A valid working hypothesis must give complete credibility to all the data: that is what is required by the scientific method. Conflicts in the data must be a failure on our part to correctly understand one set of data, or another set of data, or pieces of some sets of data, or any combination of these, including the whole or the universal set of data. We may not be able to resolve the difficulty for centuries or millennia, but we have no scientific authority to distort or modify the data either. We must hold our reservations until better solutions present themselves. In the meanwhile we confess that we are ignorant of many things.

***Redford Hypothesis***

**Edomites**

Donald B. Redford is really not permitted to explain his working hypothesis. It is possible that Redford, who may be the leading Egyptologist in the English-speaking world today, has changed his mind; or perhaps Redford is not really the author of this idea. In any case we will give him full credit for originating this hypothesis.

“Redford identifies the Shasu of Yahweh with the Edomites and argues that Yahweh was at first worshipped as an Edomite god.[[46]](#endnote-46) He also argues that one tribe of Edomites split from the main body of Edomites, moved northwest, and became one of the tribes of the Israelites, taking their god Yahweh with them. For Redford, this explains how Yahweh became the God of the Israelites.”[[47]](#endnote-47)

Simply put, the idea is that the expression *t3 sh3sw yhw* (“the land of the Shasu of Yahweh”) or its alternate spelling *t3 š3św jhw3* is commonly found in relationship with Edomites. Moreover, some of the Edomites transitioned into Israelites.

“Another communication to my Lord: We have finished letting the Shasu tribes of Edom pass the fortress of Merneptah Hotep-hir-Maat…which is in Tjeku, to the pools of Per Atum of Merneptah Hotep-hir-Maat, which are in Tjeku, to keep them alive and to keep their cattle alive…”[[48]](#endnote-48)

Since we have substantiated this quote in ANET, as a quote from part of British Museum’s document, Papyrus Anastasi 6 (1230-1201, 1192? BC), we have now moved beyond hypothesis and into the realm of archaeological and historical fact.[[49]](#endnote-49) This information is at least as valuable as the Merneptah Stele. The Edomites do belong to a class of people known to the Egyptians as Shasu. These Shasu are clearly distinct from Canaanites and Hyksos.

* The Shasu are classed as Egyptian adversaries, not as allies.[[50]](#endnote-50)
* The Shasu are Semitic and not Hamitic.
* The Shasu dress differently.
* The Shasu may speak and write differently.

**Conditions**

Nevertheless, we reject this hypothesis as well, because it is not consistent with all of the data. It leaps to the conclusion that “some of the Edomites transitioned into Israelites.” This conclusion is neither necessary nor sufficient to explain all of the data. On the other hand, the factual identification of the Shasu as a group of people of whom the Edomites were a part is a vital factual key to resolving the problem.

***Our Hypothesis***

**Abrahamites**

We have no choice to accept the idea that Edomites are members of the Shasu group or class of people. Having accepted this fact we note immediately that the Shasu are commonly understood to be a much larger group, containing far more than Edomites in their number.

“Shasu (from Egyptian *Š3sw*, probably pronounced *Shaswe*) were Semitic-speaking cattle nomads in the Levant from the late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age or Third Intermediate Period of Egypt. They were organized in clans under a tribal chieftain, and were described as brigands active from the Jezreel Valley to Ashkelon and the Sinai.

“The name evolved from a transliteration of the Egyptian word *š3sw*, meaning “those who move on foot”, into the term for Bedouin-type wanderers. The term originated in a 15th-century BCE list of peoples in Transjordan. It is used in a list of enemies inscribed on column bases at the temple of Soleb built by Amenhotep Ⅲ. Copied later by either Seti Ⅰ or Ramesses Ⅱ at Amarah-West, the list mentions six groups of Shasu: the Shasu of *S’rr*, the Shasu of *Rbn*, the Shasu of *Sm’t*, the Shasu of *Wrbr*, the Shasu of *Yhw*, and the Shasu of *Pysps*.”[[51]](#endnote-51)

**Toledoth**

In this context, some passages of Scripture may be overlooked as being unimportant: namely Genesis 36 and Psalm 105. Genesis 36 in its entirety is the Toledoth of Esau.[[52]](#endnote-52) Toledoth is a motif in Genesis, where the expression is found eleven times, each time introducing an important new aspect of the book.[[53]](#endnote-53) Some people believe that this motif is so powerful that it forms the internal outline of the book.[[54]](#endnote-54) It has always perplexed me that of the eleven repetitions of Toledoth, two should be devoted to Esau, which Hebraic form of literary emphasis by repetition, would seem to make Genesis 36 and “Esau, who is Edom” the most important chapter and topic in Genesis.

Indeed, as the chapter unfolds, we discover the record for eight significant kings, and thirty-two major tribal chiefs. About these, Scripture makes the terse comment, “before any king reigned over the children of Israel.”[[55]](#endnote-55) Lest we should miss the point Psalm 105:6-23 says:

“O you seed of Abraham His servant, you children of Jacob His chosen. He [*is*] the Lord our God. His judgments [*are*] in all the earth. He has remembered His covenant forever, the word He commanded to a thousand generations: that He made with Abraham, His oath to Isaac. [*He*] confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, to Israel, an everlasting covenant: saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:”

“When they were few men in number, yes, very few, and aliens in it. When they went from one nation to another, from [*one*] kingdom to another people. He suffered no man to do them wrong. Yes, He reproved kings for their sakes, “Touch not My Christ. Do My prophets no harm.”

“Moreover, He called for a famine on the land. He broke the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them. Joseph was sold for a slave, whose feet they hurt with fetters. He was laid in iron: until the time that his Word came. The Word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and released him. The ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, ruler of all his substance: to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom. Israel also came to Egypt. Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.”

**Dominance**

Is it not clear from these two passages of Scripture that the Edomites are a dominant political force, a massive highly developed culture, while the other relatives of Abraham are comparatively insignificant nomadic shepherds?

Abraham, though somewhat influential, is a shepherding nomad; who, because he had a beautiful wife, was once lucky enough to meet the current pharaoh. Isaac is little more than Abraham. Esau is the son who moves to visible martial and political prominence. Joseph is a slave. Israel is a beggar who needs Egyptian bread. Moab and Ammon are incestuous children. The Ishmaelites and Keturahites are the renegade offspring of second class wives.

Once the Egyptians and Redford have cracked open the door for the Edomites, it becomes virtually impossible to shut the rest of the family of Abraham out of the house.[[56]](#endnote-56)

**Shasu**

In our hypothesis, we take the Egyptian word Shasu to be a synonym for Semite, Hebrew, or relative of Abraham, which includes the Transjordan children of Lot: Moab and Ammon, who are Abraham’s grandnephews, and grandnieces. This agrees with Astour’s idea that the Shasu are widespread,[[57]](#endnote-57) but it also recognizes the Egyptian/Redford perspective that to be a Shasu, par excellence, was to be an Edomite, and this respect was accorded beyond any controversy or doubt. Thus, the Israelites were not a spinoff group of Edomites; but rather the progeny of their nearly insignificant younger fraternal twin brother. A small tribe of seventy people is dwarfed next to a significant nation.

Moreover, when Israel/Jacob returns from Padanaram or Padan Aram (Genesis 31), upon his return to the Promised Land, he immediately submitted himself to the governmental authority of his elder brother (Genesis 33). So, Israel remains under the governmental authority of Esau all his life. Israel is in fact a citizen of Edom.

However, just as Christians have a King and are citizens of the Kingdom of heaven, they are at the same time citizens of an earthly nation, such as the United States. In the very same way, Israel is a citizen of earthly Edom at the same time as he is a citizen of heavenly Yahweh.

So, it turns out that the Redford Hypothesis was correct all along, at least partially and politically correct. As far as human affairs are concerned, Israel did break off from Esau, as a group of only seventy people, did submit to the rule of Egypt, not as Hyksos adversaries, but as servants and friends. In the passage of time under the protection of Egypt, they grew to become a very numerous people, when political adversaries turned Egypt against them. At that time, they escaped from Egypt and, after forty years of hardship, were able to establish settlements in the Promised Land, as a new kingdom, situated to the northwest of Edom. Redford has nailed the situation but pieces of the record got reversed.

***YHW***

The name Yahweh is widely known outside of the Bible: recorded on the Moabite Stone (830 BC),[[58]](#endnote-58) Lachish Ostraca Ⅱ, Ⅲ, Ⅳ, Ⅴ, Ⅵ, Ⅷ, Ⅸ (circa 589 BC),[[59]](#endnote-59) and from Arad Ostraca (circa 598 BC).[[60]](#endnote-60) There is no question that this is the name of God. That being said, the Egyptian term *yhw* is somewhat hotly contested.

Since the Soleb list previously quoted “mentions six groups of Shasu: the Shasu of *S’rr*, the Shasu of *Rbn*, the Shasu of *Sm’t*, the Shasu of *Wrbr*, the Shasu of *Yhw*, and the Shasu of *Pysps*,” we might anticipate some parallelism of structure in the names. “Yahu is [assumed to be] a toponym”, which would tend to make all of these words toponyms or place names.

Shasu is thought to be a classification name, pedestrians, walkers, footmen (for example: as opposed to horsemen, or charioteers), or semi-nomadic “Bedouin-type wanderers.” So it is not difficult to equate with the Israelites, a tribal body of people without certain earthly residence.

This seems to make the identity *Yhw* ≡ Yahweh, an absurd impossibility. BBS dodges this problem by making the place *Yhw*, take its name from its patron god, *Yhw*. This creates other problems. It makes Yhw into just another idol. It denies that Yahweh appeared in His Glory or Shəkinah and physically led the Israelites out of Egypt. It fails to admit that no place named *Yhw* has ever been found.

On the other hand, if we accept the identity Yahu ≡ Yahweh; then we anticipate that *S’rr*, *Rbn*, *Sm’t*, *Wrbr*, and *Pysps* are all names of deities in parallel with *Yhw*. Since no evidence for such deities has ever been adduced, this seems to lead to a dead end: even if it did not fail we would be left with names for five more lifeless idols.[[61]](#endnote-61)

Having rejected the idea that *Yhw* is either a toponym or a local deity that became a toponym, we are left with the intriguing possibility that *Yhw* really is God, is the Yahweh of the Bible. Our only objection is that this construct seems to bring Yahweh to Abraham and Israel via Midian, rather than the other way around. On the other hand, we fail to see why Redford and his kin might just have gotten the story slightly backwards.

“For half a century it has been generally admitted that we have here the Tetragrammaton, the name of the Israelite god “Yahweh”; and if this be the case, as it undoubtedly is, the passage constitutes the most precious indication of the whereabouts during the late 15th century BC of an enclave revering this god.”[[62]](#endnote-62)

“By the 14th century BC, before the cult of Yahweh had reached Israel, groups of Edomite and Midianites worshipped Yahweh as their god.”[[63]](#endnote-63)

However, according to Ostrand, the Egyptians readily absorbed other deities.

“All of this illustrates that the Egyptians were perfectly willing to worship foreign gods, including building temples to them, giving them Egyptian attributes, emphasizing their similarities to their own gods and goddesses, and even sometimes to completely equating them … with their own deities.

“By studying the general syncretistic acceptance by the ancient Egyptians of the gods of other nations and by comparing their syncretistic acceptance of foreign gods with the treatment afforded Yahweh, one recognizes that Yahweh was for some reason treated very differently. Clearly the Egyptians knew about Yahweh as can be seen in the Soleb, Amarah-West, and Medinet Habu topographical lists, but they did not worship him, and they apparently did not want to worship him.

“Nor was Yahweh equated to or identified with any Egyptian deity. There were no temples to Yahweh built by the Egyptians, nor were there any artistic representations made of him, or in fact even any discussions of him in Egyptian texts. There are no other mentions of him in any Egyptian texts besides the topographical references found at Soleb, Amarah-West, and Medinet Habu. It appears that the ancient Egyptians placed Yahweh into a category all by himself. To say the least, this is very strange for the syncretistic Egyptians. A possible explanation is that Yahweh was seen by the Egyptians as an enemy God, of an enemy tribal group which was a part of the hated Shasu peoples who lived north of Egypt.”[[64]](#endnote-64)

Contrary to Ostrand, we observe that the Shasu peoples were not generally and universally hated by the Egyptians. The Shasu were welcome and resident in the Nile Delta. They were treated with kindness by Egyptian border guards when returning to Edom with their cattle. Ostrand has made a minor error here. It is *Yhw* Himself who is despised.

Perhaps we can discover a way whereby both Redford and Astour can be correct, each viewing the problem from differing perspectives. We have demonstrated that Astour is correct in observing that the Shasu were scattered all over the place. We have also demonstrated that as far as recognizable government entities are concerned, the Edomites are the dominant entity. Younger brother, Israel/Jacob certainly appears to be an Edomite citizen, under the protection of his elder brother. The other descendants and relatives of Abraham are scattered and politically insignificant.

On the other hand, the message of Yahweh is reversed. There is no real reason to believe that for all of the many branches of Abraham’s family a, perhaps small, remnant did not retain fidelity to father Abraham’s faith. Whether any of them knew the name Yahweh is another matter.[[65]](#endnote-65)

Why, then, is *Yhw* so despised?

What was intolerable to the Egyptians was not the idea of another tribal deity, or household idol. Egypt adopted these without compunction and even intermarried them with their own gods. What was intolerable was that there could be a God above all gods, a Lord of the Universe. This is why *Yhw* was despised. This is why Amenhotep Ⅳ/Akhenaten was so ostracized; and soon after his death, marginalized. Akhenaten imitated the faith of *Yhw*. The ultimate Egyptian heresy was the claim that there was a supreme eternal God, by any name.

“Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to Your name give Glory, for Your mercy, [and] for Your truth’s sake. Why should the heathen say, “Where [is] now their God?” But our God [is] in the heavens. He has done what He has pleased.

“Their idols [are] silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not. Eyes have they, but they see not. They have ears, but they hear not. Noses have they, but they smell not. They have hands, but they handle not. Feet have they, but they walk not. Neither speak they, through their throat. Those who make them are like them. [So is] everyone that trusts in them.[[66]](#endnote-66)

After all, the priests can manipulate all the local and household gods, these are no threat whatsoever. The God of the Universe is a different matter; He must be obeyed: therefore, He cannot be recognized without the loss of authority and control inherent in corrupt systems.[[67]](#endnote-67) This is precisely why *Yhw* is so despised.

***Conclusion***

We rejected the BBS working hypothesis after showing evidentiary, logical, and scientific cause. We examined the Redford working hypothesis; found partial support for it; tentatively rejected it; yet with further evidence and reflection realized that it was correct from the point of the Egyptian political earthly perspective. Additional support for Redford was drawn from Genesis 36 and Psalm 105.

We also examined Astour’s claim for a widely dispersed Shasu existence. The only known group that fits the geographically dispersed and diverse behavior of the Shasu, is the extended family of Abraham, so this became a core element of our working hypothesis, by default.

Finally, we examined the Name, Yahweh, YHWH, or *Yhw*. We concluded that the origin of the name could not be determined from presently available evidence. Although, it would be nice to know the origin of the Name, it’s not essential: for we understand that He is eternally the Living God of the Universe, revealed as such to Abraham and all the patriarchs and matriarchs. Hence, the disclosure of the Name, was immediately offensive to Egyptians: for Yahweh was the God, above all gods, and he expected to be obeyed. The Egyptians were just not accustomed to obeying anybody else.

[[68]](#endnote-68)

1. Proof enough: the Israelites are not transitioned Canaanites. If the Israelites were transitioned Canaanites who adopt the name of *Yhw* we would expect some traces of this in their legends and other literature.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvR8UqvuSeI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qu5eqJY1HKA>

<http://maps.thefullwiki.org/Shasu> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Yet here, BBS misdirects our attention: for it is not at Karnak where we will find the pertinent evidence; rather Soleb and Amara West are the places where we must search.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karnak>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soleb>

<http://www.amarawest.org/> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seti_I>

<https://pharaoh.se/pharaoh/Seti-I>

<http://web0.memphis.edu/hypostyle/aboutreliefsinscriptions.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. The problem with this monument is that it is not at all clear from the BBS discussion that the specific words, *t3 sh3sw yhw3*, are written here. They ***may*** be written at Karnak but we have been unable to verify any such claim. However, these words ***are*** written at Soleb and Amara West: this appears to be information of which Redford is very well aware, but not permitted by BBS to state. It is the testimony of Soleb that connects the words, *t3 sh3sw yhw3*, to Amenhotep III (1388-1351 BC), supporting evidence for a 1406 BC Exodus.

Here are the result of a computer search of one collection of Seti Ⅰ texts.

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/tape17/PQDD_0009/NQ35116.pdf>

*t3*: pages 69, 72, 73, 78, 109, 143, 210, 350

*sh3sw*: not found

*ya-h-wa*, *yhw*: not found [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shasu>

Note that Pepi Ⅰ Meryre (2332-2287 BC) and his General, Weni commonly speak of Sand Dwellers, which group name, as with Shasu, is usually construed to mean Bedouin. A term also used by Thutmose III (ANET: page 240). Now surely the Egyptians knew the difference between Canaanites, Philistines (both Hamitic), and others. So who are the Sand Dwellers? Are they identical to the Shasu? The answers to these questions may very well expand our concept of who the Shasu were, where they lived, and during which times they were prominent in Egyptian cultural, martial, and political affairs.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pepi_I_Meryre>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autobiography_of_Weni>

Here is a very up-to-date and informative article on the Shasu of *Yhw*:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx>

And another informative article on the Shasu in general:

<http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/papers/ets/2005/Cooperdoc/Cooperdoc.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. BBS never stipulates which Egyptian texts or where they are located; yet, here they concede the existence of such texts. The location of such texts is found at Soleb on a monument belonging to Amenhotep III (1388-1351 BC), which places these words, *t3 sh3sw yhw3*, soundly in a fourteenth century context, which is fatal to the BBS chain of logic. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. We actually resent the vocalization of *Yhw* as Yahu. It appears to be a deliberately pejorative epithet aimed at associating the name of God with characters from Gulliver’s Travels. The Yahoos are humans, especially debased humans. The philosophical point is hard to miss.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s_Travels#Part_IV:_A_Voyage_to_the_Country_of_the_Houyhnhnms> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The Shasu may be dated from late Bronze (1500-1200 BC) to early Iron ages (1200-476 BC), and even more broadly. Again, all the evidence suggests that Shasu is also a class name and not a tribal identity. We will address the dodge that the toponym Y-H-W (*Yhw*) derives from a patron deity later on in this paper. Note that BBS is arguing for the existence of a name, *Yhw*, which they have not in fact referenced at Karnak. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. The identity, *Yhw* ≡ Yahweh, does not seem to be disputed any longer, in spite of its linguistic difficulties. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. The Bible nowhere refers to the Shasu (walkers) living in Midian. Not one single reference to the word Shasu can be found anywhere in the Bible. Nor is Shasu cognate with the Hebrew, halak, in any of its forms. The potential connection to שׇׁסוּ, שׇׁסׇה, or שׇׁסַס seems farfetched, yet not impossible. Neither is there any biblical Greek word that resembles Shasu. Nor is there any connection in or out of the Bible between the Shasu, who are Semitic, and the Canaanites, who are Hamitic. There is an Egyptian reference to *t3 sh3sw s`r* (or *S’rr*) which would be Edomite. Both the Edomites and the Midianites are Semitic. Once the idea takes root, exclusively from Egyptology, that Shasu is a pejorative Egyptian term for Semites, Hebrews, or any of the descendants, grandnephews or grandnieces of Abraham, we begin to understand a possible reason for how and why Shasu are found all over the Promised Land, throughout Edom, and far into Transjordan. However, this idea of Shasu is strictly Egyptian. The idea limiting and linking the Shasu to Midian is a far too restricted view of either the biblical witness concerning Semites or of known Egyptian references to the *sh3sw*. We are not denying that the Midianites are Shasu: we believe that they are. We are denying that this is stated in either the Bible or in Egyptian source documents or monuments.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Seir>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midian> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Moses does not merely “encounter” Yahweh. Yahweh, a speaking, visible person in the form of fire and smoke confronts Moses at the Burning Bush. The bush does not burn, it is Yahweh’s Presence that burns without consuming. One technical name for this Presence is the Shəkinah.

Falsification of this presence invalidates all of the Old Testament for exactly the same reason that falsification of the Resurrection invalidates all of the New Testament (1 Corinthians 15:12-15, 19). Philosophically, denial of either the Shəkinah or the Resurrection is an error of magnitude on the same order as refusing to believe in atomic theory, neutrinos, or Higgs particles, simply because no one has ever seen them. Well, 2.5 million and more people, over a period of 860 years, were said to have seen the Shəkinah, while the Resurrection was witnessed by over 500 people (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). This is not the sort of evidence that can be falsified. Nor is it the kind of evidence that can be cast overboard just because we don’t like it. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Coogan has distorted the facts. What “we have in Egyptian sources [is] something that appears to be a name like Yahweh,” *Yhw* that is not connected to any specific location. *Yhw* is paralleled to toponyms elsewhere, so the realization that *Yhw* is not a toponym, but a personal name, is only discovered with great difficulty, by a process of elimination. There is no place named *Yhw*. On the other hand, the *sh3sw* are found all over the place: in *S’rr*, *Rbn*, *Sm’t*, *Wrbr*, and *Pysps*. Indeed the previous narration in BBS places the *sh3sw* in both southern Canaan, and northern Saudi Arabia. Other references place the *sh3sw* in Edom and Transjordan. They participated as spies in the Battle of Kadesh against, Ramesses II. Kadesh is eighty miles north of Damascus, as the crow flies; around one-hundred-seven miles on foot. They seem to be everywhere: in the Nile delta, in the Promised Land (both north and south), and in Transjordan. This known widespread habitation of the *sh3sw* requires a broader definition of their identity than Midianite. The broader definitions that fit are Semite, Hebrew, or family of Abraham, of which Midian is only a very small part. By the way, the Midianites are clearly Semitic, not Canaanite. The idea that Moses met with Yahweh in Midian is biblical, not Egyptian. “Egyptian sources” do not locate *Yhw* anywhere. The Shasu are located in Edom and many other places.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kadesh#Hittite_allies> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Not just any deity; the only living Deity appears. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. “There is no evidence [that refutes] a mass migration.” “There is no evidence!” In science we do not deny one kind of evidence, the biblical evidence, simply because it is not confirmed by other methods. What sort of evidence is expected from nomadic people living exclusively in tents for forty years and never camped at any one spot for more than a few days? The absence of evidence is exactly what we do expect. What would be truly alarming, even earth shattering, a cosmic reality, and totally inconsistent scientifically would be that any evidence were found. That would give everybody a heart attack. The evidence at Soleb supports an early fourteenth century or late fifteenth century Exodus.

Egypt is very possibly the dominant world empire of this era. If the claims of Thutmose III (1479-1425 BC) are even half true, Egyptian world domination would be the universal realty during his reign. As a sophisticated world empire, border control and customs management were constant necessities. Random groups from many nations crossed Egyptian borders every day. The observation “that a small group did escape from Egypt” is comparable to noting that the sun arose: it is a moot observation. ANET: 234-243 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. There is no evidence that these were Canaanites. There is no evidence that this even happened. This conjecture will be clearly refuted later in this paper. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. This is just subjective conjecture. There is not even enough evidence from which to draw a scientific induction. Such miscellaneous random groups, coming and going all the time, either met *Yhw* or they did not meet *Yhw*. Generally speaking, stories about *Yhw* were violently repulsive to many Egyptians: most other pagan groups would be equally repulsed. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. That Faust would glorify his opinion with the word, probably, surprises us in a scientific discussion like this. Probably requires a statistical calculation or at least a meaningful estimate of chance. Here that probability is zero. We know nothing about the size or origin of such a group from archaeology, and even less about its supposed ideology and its importance. The whole house is built out of conjecture. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. This supposed random chance encounter is based on supposition for which no shred of evidence exists. Once again, the chain of logic is based on “resonance” rather than reason. In a scientific discussion, this is science fiction. There is no evidence that such “liberated slaves” ever existed. All the evidence from Hazor contradicts such a liberation movement among Canaanites. Canaanites were not Hyksos, and there is no evidence that they were involved with the troublesome fifteenth Hyksos dynasty at Avaris (1674-1535). Canaanites were, for the most part, loyal Egyptian allies.

Had Canaanites in fact fled into the hills from places like Hazor the population shift would have been massive, easily fifty thousand, or even hundreds of thousands. It never happened. There is no evidence that it ever happened.

Please note the emphasis on the egalitarian nature of this society. BBS is building a mythic structure of free, self-determined and independent society. This is not the society of Yahweh with its central regnal shrine at Jerusalem. This is not a society that confesses its very existence as being completely dependent upon Yahweh. This does not correlate with a society that pauses in the middle of a military campaign to correct lapses of worship (Joshua 7), and establish its first central regnal shrine at Ebal (Joshua 8:30-35). What the evidence shows is that there is nothing remotely egalitarian about Israelite culture and society. Freedom is the gift conferred on those who walk with Yahweh. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Yet for Meyers, such a deity does not really exist. The only deity that exists for Meyers is the idol named Freedom. The idea that power resides in messages is magic, voodoo, the genie in the bottle. Authority is a derived property of messages, power is not. Power depends on whatever force that an author of a message may exert, and how quickly he may exert that force. There is no such thing as a powerful message of freedom, separated from Yahweh, Who alone has the power to make freedom happen. Freedom requires the powerful works of God, and the eternal vigilance of people to become effective.

Meyers builds a false model of escape from Egyptian/Canaanite tyranny, in order to empower and enable the construction of the equally false model of escape from Yahweh and His tyranny. That which the Egyptians loathed, and humanity in general loathes, is that Yahweh has a Law, and He expects it to be obeyed. This is why it is so necessary to the whole BBS chain of logic to attempt to eviscerate the evidence of Torah. Humanity cannot stand being told that it is wrong. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Repeating the error only compounds it; repeating the error can never make it true. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Associating the Israelites with the Mötley Crüe heavy metal band does not make the BBS hypothesis any more logical or evidence centered. The 600,000 fighting men, plus the elderly, women and children that left in the Exodus were not all pure blooded ethnic Israelites. What they held in common was that, service to Yahweh is freedom, and made more sense than continuing in slavery in Egypt. All of them, regardless of ethnicity were subsumed under one of the thirteen Israelite tribes. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. The “new vision” is simply that they watched Yahweh lead them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. The “revolutionary spirit” comes from the dark side of Eden. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. This is a bald-faced lie. It shamelessly insists that powerless people become free, merely by the exertion of the will, without any necessity of assistance from God, or need of His power. The Israelites made no such choice. Yahweh had to urge them on their way. Frequently their “choice” was to turn back to Egypt. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. The reassertion of the claim of dominant oral tradition related to events between 1486 and 1010 BC, and its attendant claim that these events are pre-historic, having only a minimal historical kernel, does not make either of these claims true. We have refuted both of these claims in every one of our previous papers. We utterly reject the subjective invention that there is any Old Testament oral tradition of any substance outside of a few places in Genesis, possibly Job, and maybe a few Psalms and Proverbs. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. The claim that these acts were not documented immediately, flies in the face of the evidence. Subliminally, this suggests a case for the existence of “later” writing in 950, 850, 600, and 500 BC; it is not a proof for such a false claim. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. The offhanded reference to Habakkuk 3:3 does not refer to Midian, it refers to Teman. See Numbers 22, where the biblical evidence exposes the fact that only a handful of Midianites, like Jethro, were actually faithful to Yahweh. The highly apocalyptic language of Habakkuk compares God’s coming to judge the world with the terrifying experience of Moses at Sinai (Exodus 19-20). Yahweh does not come from Midian: the evidence does not suggest that He ever did come from Midian. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Rather, the Bible teaches that *Yhw* adopted Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; through leaders such as Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, and others; employing prophets, priests, and kings as His instruments in the dissemination of His message. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. The birth of the monotheism of Yahweh is Creation. Obedience to the monotheism of Yahweh is another matter: for some people it does not appear to ever come. There are other forms of so-called monotheism, but all of these relate to forms of idolatry, which are better known as henotheism. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. The fundamental problem here is that “common understanding” is wrong. Ignorance of the Old Testament has bred an idealized, but false impression of what it really says. When we begin to read it for its plain meaning, we discover this description of mixed Yahweh-ism and idolatry perfectly fits the description of practices in upper Canaan both during the period of Judges; and, again, after the death of Solomon, under the leadership of Jeroboam Ⅰ, who had formed alliances with and trained in Egypt (1 Kings 11:40). [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. The Bible makes it perfectly clear that the Israelites were unfaithful to Yahweh throughout most of their history. Their false repentance is revealed in repeated cycles of pretended remorse, followed by Yahweh’s patient deliverance. This is the natural course of humanity. Mankind is incapable of self-deliverance. Even after the so-called development of monotheism after 516 BC, the Jews quickly found other idols, they just stopped making them out of earthy materials such as clay. The new idols were: false nationalism, Phariseeism, Sadduceeism, and the like. Nor is the New Testament community freed from idolatry. This is a heart problem, and the heart must be dealt with every day. Idolatry does not come and go simply because we do or do not have figurines in our houses. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Most “likely” this is true. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Which is exactly what the Bible records “on a practical level.” In talk, they were almost always monotheists. Talk is cheap. Like us, in practice they were rampant idolaters. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. We already know and concede that the Israelites are in Canaan; yet, not because the Merneptah Stele says so. The Egyptian word *ysrỉꜣr* or *ysrỉ3r* or *I.si.ri.ar* does not an Israelite make: not necessarily, even though we suspect that the Egyptians had no l sound and may have substituted r for l. Nor do the cities named unquestionably put the Israelite in the Promised Land; it is the biblical record that firmly establishes both of these things. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. We take issue with the word, “after”, in the previous sentence. The Israelite population growth took place in Egypt (1621-1406 BC). The population growth rate in this period was about 5%, doubling in size every fourteen years. The Israelite population was already large. The population growth for the forty years in the desert was virtually zero. Likewise, the population growth during conquest and settlement was very low.

On the other hand, there were roughly 20,000 Canaanites in Hazor alone. Roughly 7/8 of them were from the lower city, about 17,500 people. The construct that the population of the central hills amounted to 25 settlements, and 3,000 people is false. No matter what the ethnic consistency of the population was, the numbers do not concur with the evidence. A Canaanite population shift of 60,000 or more in 1200 would be more consistent with all the facts: there is no evidence to support such a Canaanite population shift.

Barring famine or other disasters, populations almost always increase. The thirteen tribes were in existence from 1621 BC; other Semites, even other ethnicities, who came to believe in Yahweh were subsumed under the thirteen-tribe, skeletal organization. These were already monotheists at the start: perversion was a later development. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. What BBS means by “larger-than-life” is exaggerated and magnified out of all proportion to reality. For BBS, exceptional and extraordinary historical people simply do not exist: Noah, Abraham, Thutmose III, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Alexander, Cleopatra, Julius, Napoleon, George Washington, and the like. Any unusual human performance is branded as “larger-than-life”, marginalized, trivialized, and finally denied.

The introduction of David is irrelevant to the claim that the Israelites were Canaanites who escaped the tyranny of life in Egypt and Hazor to amalgamate under the rubric of *Yhw* modified to become Yahweh. The lives of either David or Solomon do not speak to these issues in any evidentiary way: they are simply emotional filler. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Note that this “powerful new enemy” is neither Egyptian nor Canaanite. BBS never pauses long enough to draw a logical connection between the Egyptians, Canaanites, and Philistines: yet the biblical evidence does draw such a connection. This “powerful new enemy” supposedly arises during a period that is generally claimed to be non- or pre-historical. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. The existence of a “new” covenant under David, presupposes the existence of a prior “old” covenant. From the perspective of writing in 950 (during the reign of Solomon), 850, 600, and 500 BC in documents called J, E, D, and P, what can the contents of David’s covenant and its “old” covenant predecessor possibly be?

This is a covenant (David’s), which, like all the others, is broken and therefore supposed to be untrue in any historic sense, which is exactly the complaint of Ethan the Ezrahite (Psalm 89). The God of such a covenant must, therefore, be a mythic figure. Thus, it’s alright to be a monotheist, as long as God doesn’t actually exist. The problem for Ethan is that he cannot possibly see the birth of Christ as the resolution to his problem. If the covenant with David is falsified, then so are the claims of Christ. The way the word Bible is bandied about in this discussion, one might be misled to suppose that the biblical evidence is actually being respected. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Yahweh was the “national God of Israel” ever since Israel was constituted as a nation around 1406 BC. Yahweh simply moves His visible earthly cult center from a tent at Shiloh (Psalm 78:60, 67), disciplining the Philistines along the way (Psalm 78:61, 66), to a temple at Jerusalem (Psalm 78:68-69), which has its foundation in the covenant which Yahweh chose for David (Psalm 78:70-72). [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. “Some sceptics today have argued there was no such thing as a” mass Exodus of two-million Israelites, led by Yahweh and His vicegerents, Moses and Aaron, beginning in 1406 BC and arriving in the Promised Land under a new vicegerent, Joshua in 1364 BC. “Some sceptics today have argued there was no such thing as a” historicity for Adam, Noah, Shem, Heber, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israelites, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, the Judges, Eli, Saul, or Samuel. “Some sceptics today” will argue anything that gets them any form of public notoriety. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. “The best discussion of the place names in Egyptian topographical lists that are related to the location of “the land of the Shasu of Yahweh” is that of Michael Astour in his chapter in the Festshrift Elmar Edel published in 1979. Astour points out that the place names listed at Soleb and Amarah-West include both Egyptian possessions in Syria-Palestine as well as non-Egyptian controlled ethnic groups and regions in that area.”

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx>

<http://jacksonsnyder.com/arc/2010/Yahweh-in-Egypt.pdf>

<https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Astour> [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. ANET: Pritchard, James B., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, third edition with supplement (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1969: 710 pages), pages 242-243 provides a chart, “Lists of Asiatic Countries Under the Egyptian Empire.” This chart is compiled from the conquest lists of various pharaohs beginning with Thutmose III, who may have originated the custom of making such lists. The word Shasu appears in the lists of Thutmose IV (1398-1388 BC), Amenhotep III (1388-1351 BC), Horemheb (1319-1292 BC), Seti Ⅰ (1290-1279 BC), Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC), and Shoshenq Ⅰ (943-922 BC). Thus the Shasu are known across the fourteenth through tenth centuries; as well as throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twenty-second dynasties. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. “The Asiatic Campaign of Amenhotep II (1425-1398 BC)” lists 15,200 Shasu men, prisoners with goods, small cattle, cattle, … , and weapons. ANET: 247

Among the “Campaigns of Seti Ⅰ”, “On the north exterior wall of the great hypostyle hall at Karnak Set Ⅰ … has left … at least four objectives: against the Shasu-Bedouin of Sinai and southern Palestine….” ANET: 254

NB: the divergence of opinions about Egyptian dates between the scholarly opinions of 1969 at Princeton, and the more modern views expressed on Wiki: nor do all Wiki articles agree on dating.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_ancient_Egypt> [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. As far as toponyms are concerned, the Egyptian term for Cisjordan appears to be Retjenu, which was subdivided into Djahy, Lebanon, Amurru. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Michael Czernichow Astour (1916-2004) had a long career as Professor of Yiddish and Russian Literature at Brandeis University and as Professor of History (Classical cultures and Ancient Near East) at Southern Illinois University (Edwardsville).

<http://cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/php/authors.php?auid=18243> [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shasu#Shasu_of_Yhw>

We search in vain for technical details about the two Egyptian texts: they appear to be the same texts found at Soleb and Amara West. These texts appear to coordinate, at least geographically, with the record of Moses sojourn in Midian (1446-1406 BC), where and when Jethro or Reuel, a priest of Midian becomes Moses’ father-in-law. Previously (1486-1446 BC), Moses was under the authority of Egyptian education, where he would have learned hieroglyphics (the Egyptian language) and cuneiform (the Akkadian and international language of diplomacy in 1388-1332). However, Moses may have been denied any real knowledge of Israel’s history during this period. In the providence of God it is entirely conceivable that Moses relearned the Israelite family history from Jethro, which was later certified and completed by JHVH at the burning bush. It is certain that Moses learned a great deal from Jethro, but how much is not specifically known. It is equally certain that Moses learned much more from his conversations with JHVH; conversations, which because of their miraculous context, are either indisputably free of error, or totally falsified frauds and hoaxes; frauds and hoaxes that are so cleverly conceived and constructed that they deceived a reported 2.5 million people. There is no archaeological, philosophical, or theological middle ground here. We are either confronted with the copied remnants of absolute truth, or we are confronted with a horrendous lie. Based on this history, in the context of more miracles, JHVH leads the Exodus, with His vicegerent, Moses. The Egyptians witness all of these first events. However, the Egyptians have every motive for rewriting history as all politicians do. The evidence for such spinning of Egyptian history is not difficult to find. The Merneptah Stele itself is recorded on both sides, precisely because Merneptah was perfectly willing to rip it out of the wall of the temple of Amenhotep III and put it, face-to-the-wall in his own temple, and inscribe his own version of history on the rough back side of the massive stone. The ancestral sequence is: Amenhotep III, Akhenaten, Smenkhkare or Neferneferuaten, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, Ramesses Ⅰ, Seti Ⅰ, Ramesses II, and Merneptah. Merneptah evidently had so little respect for his tenth predecessor that he didn’t mind effacing an important monument from (1388–1351 BC).

In Merneptah’s defense, Egyptians evidently thought of monuments as we think of chalkboards: they were written upon, only to be erased and written upon repeatedly, again. The Lighthouse of Alexandria (280) has a similar story. Ostensibly, Sostratus left his name inscribed under the plaster dedicated to Ptolemy. Evidently, by 280 BC the Egyptians had gained a reputation for altering monuments.

Moses is thus an eyewitness for all of the Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Most of Deuteronomy. After Moses’ death (1366 BC) scribes add details concerning his departure. It is perhaps convenient that scholars are willing to suppress the specific technical details of these two Egyptian texts: for if a solid connection can be made between the Shasu (1400-1301 BC), it might firmly establish the historicity of the Exodus. These Egyptian texts witness a history that is nearly 200 years older than Merneptah. Why was this not explored in greater detail in BBS? [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. We agree and will prove that the Shasu have an Edomite identity. We do not agree “that Yahweh was at first worshipped as an Edomite god.” [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Redford, Egypt, Canaan, and Israel, pp. 272-273, quoted in:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx#Article> [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. From a letter, dated 1192 BC, found in, Siegfried Herrmann, *Israel in Egypt* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1973). p. 25, quoted in:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx#Article>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0006_0_05562.html>

<http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=113797&partId=1>

<http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/anastasiVI_papyrus.htm>

<http://bibliotecadigital.uca.edu.ar/repositorio/revistas/toward-new-synthesis-god-edom.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. ANET: page 259 [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kadesh#Battle>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kadesh#Hittite_allies>

(see note at bottom of list).

Kadesh is about 80 miles north of Damascus

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadesh> [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shasu>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soleb>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amara,\_Nubia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amara%2C_Nubia)

<http://www.amarawest.org/>

A third, partial list at Medinet Habu near Luxor is attributed to Rameses III.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medinet\_Habu\_(temple)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medinet_Habu_%28temple%29) [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Genesis 36:1, 9; [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Unfortunately, such an outline omits a few very significant events or movements in Genesis that are not specifically identified by the word, toledoth: so well constructed outlines must think beyond this single motif: for other factors are at play, principal of which is death. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Genesis 36:31 [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. If Redford’s claim identifying “the Shasu of Yahweh with the Edomites” has any weight in convergence or for resonance with the biblical text, we would be forced to conclude that Shasu is a reference to the family of Abraham: including all the Edomites, Israelites, Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammon, Keturahites, and possibly others. We are forced to take such a possibility very seriously. Shasu may be the common Egyptian pejorative term for any Semite, Hebrew, or descendent of Abraham; now the claim for Transjordan Shasu makes sense: for most of these peoples are either direct descendants or grandnephews of Abraham. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. “The term Shasu is almost exclusively used in New Kingdom texts for semi-nomadic peoples living in parts of Lebanon, Syria, Sinai, Canaan, and Transjordan. When used for nomads living in these areas, the term Shasu seems to have been used by the Egyptians almost exclusively for people groups that can clearly be identified as Semitic herders.”

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx#Article> [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Dated from the reign of King Mesha of Moab to around 830 BC. ANET: page 320 [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Wiki dates at 590 BC. NB that these dates are firmly in advance of the 586 BC destruction, and yet the writer dares to use the unspeakable name of Yahweh in an almost common or colloquial manner, without protecting it from speech. This seems to fly in the face of some things: namely, silence in the use of Yahweh, and the exclusive development of monotheism after 500 BC. ANET: page 322

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lachish_letters> [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. ANET: page 569 [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. It is important to realize that the term, Shasu, is never used on the Merneptah Stele. The debate in this article is about the dress of people depicted on the Stele. The dress is ostensibly Canaanite, which is supposed to prove that *ysrỉꜣr* or *ysrỉ3r* or *I.si.ri.ar* must mean Israel; so from the picture, the Israelites must be Canaanites, with which idea Redford himself disagrees. The material of the Merneptah Stele is about the topic of battle campaigns against Libya to the west and Sea People. The discussion of *ysrỉꜣr* or *ysrỉ3r* or *I.si.ri.ar* is a two line afterthought about battles in the east. It is ludicrous to suppose that the pictorial representation at the top of the stele is of anyone other than Libyans.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shasu>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah_Stele> [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, pages 272-273, quoted in:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx#Article> [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. The phrase “before the cult of Yahweh had reached Israel” is the only thing to which we object. One could get the mistaken impression that Yahweh was first worshipped in Edom and Midian. However, the Toorn comment, properly construed does not mean or even imply any such thing.

Toorn, K. Van Der, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Ugarit and Israel: Continuity and Changes in the Forms of Religious Life* (BRILL: 1996), pages 282-283, quoted in: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shasu#Shasu_of_Yhw> [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Kenneth Ostrand, “Aliens in Egypt,” *KMT*. 17.2, Summer 2006, pp. 71-76, quoted in: <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/03/08/The-Name-Yahweh-in-Egyptian-Hieroglyphic-Texts.aspx#Article> [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. There are several theoretical ways to resolve this problem, without resorting to the Documentary Hypotheses. The references to the name Yahweh in Genesis could have been inserted by Moses to clarify the record. Yahweh could have been known throughout Genesis, but the Israelites in general, and Moses in particular lapsed under the weight of Egyptian indoctrination. In either case Moses may have first learned of Yahweh from Jethro, or they could have both learned together from the communications at the Burning Bush. Neither possibility presents insurmountable difficulties. Theories are nice; yet it would be nicer still to find evidence. Did the monotheist worshippers of the Living God of the Universe, Abraham and his extended family, know Him by His name Yahweh? This is a question that we cannot answer with certainty. However, the origin of the first human use of His Name, does not indicate the origination of His existence or worship. Whether He was Yahweh to Abraham, or not; He was eternally the Living God of the Universe. His worship flowed from Abraham down to Moses and not the other way around. The revelation of the Name was merely part of the worship development. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Psalm 115:1-8 [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Romans 1:18-19 [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)