

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE IV.

THE DATE OF THE EXODUS AND THE  
CHRONOLOGY OF JUDGES.

BY HAROLD M. WIENER, M.A., LL.B., OF LINCOLN'S INN,  
BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

IN the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA for July, 1916, I showed that the Exodus from Egypt took place in the second year of the Pharaoh Merneptah. I had hoped to postpone any detailed discussion of the chronology of the Judges till after the appearance of the larger Cambridge Septuagint<sup>1</sup>; but, in the course of a sympathetic notice in the *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* (vol. xvii. pp. 396-401), Dr. G. Ch. Aalders has urged certain arguments against my view which can be sufficiently answered on our present materials. I therefore think it best to proceed at once to a further consideration of the chronological difficulties, leaving any necessary corrections to be made if and when we have further materials.

Dr. Aalders points out that there are three main views: viz. (1) that Thothmes III. was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and his son Amenhotep II. the Pharaoh of the Exodus; (2) that Rameses II. and Merneptah were the rulers in question; and (3) that the event took place *circa* 1130 B.C. The last, which is the view of Eerdmans, he dismisses sum-

<sup>1</sup> The part dealing with Judges has appeared since this was written, and the material readings are noticed in this article, but we shall have to wait for Kings.

marily on account of the chronological difficulties. Against the present writer's contention that the Exodus took place in the second year of Merneptah, Aalders urges, mainly, the 480 years of 1 Kings vi. 1. It is true that I dealt with this very shortly in the earlier article, because I knew that the weight of modern opinion favored the schematic character of the number, and, consequently, thought that more detailed discussion could be left till fresh textual materials were available for the whole period. Aalders makes two other points. He says that Ex. xiv. 6 shows that the Pharaoh himself commanded the pursuit, and he infers that he was drowned in the Red Sea. This is certainly not true of Merneptah. Lastly, he says that in the Amarna letters the Habiri generally lack the determinative for place, but that it is given to them once. From this he argues that its absence in the passage relating to Israel in the Israel stele does not necessarily prove that the people had no territory.

We may clear the ground by dealing with this third point first. As I am neither an Assyriologist nor an Egyptologist I cannot pretend to an opinion as to whether the omission of the place determinative in letters written in one language of which I am ignorant would or would not justify its omission in an inscription composed in another language of which I am equally ignorant. It is easy to conceive that the one instance in the Amarna letters may be due to a scribal error or to some local circumstance justifying the usage, but that is not a matter for me. On the Israel stele, however, certain observations may be offered: (*a*) Apparently the usage we find there is the only one possible, if Israel was not a territorial unit. It is the appropriate way and the only appropriate way of speaking of an Israel on its wanderings. (*b*) The word is grouped with a number of other words

(Kheta, etc.) which have the sign for land. "In reality it is provided with the sign of a foreign people, so that in contrast with all of them [i.e. the places and districts named in the stanza. H. M. W.] it is designated not as a land but as a tribe" (C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, *Israel* [1911], p. 38). This seems to be as good evidence as can possibly be obtained in the circumstances, for obviously the Egyptian poet could not look into the future and say, "Israel which some thirty-eight years hence will invade and settle in Canaan." (c) Pe-kanana, two miles from Hebron, is not yet in Israel's possession. That would be inexplicable if the Exodus had taken place under Amenhotep II.

The view that the Pharaoh was drowned in the Red Sea can also be answered. In Ex. xiv. 28 we read how the waters covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the host of Pharaoh, but Pharaoh himself is significantly omitted. "Pharaoh's chariots and his host" — not, be it observed, Pharaoh — "hath he cast into the sea: and his chosen captains are drowned in the Red Sea" (xv. 4). And in verse 19 we read that "the horses of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea." That is not the language that would have been used either in the narrative or in the song of triumph had Pharaoh himself been among the drowned. I quite agree that Pharaoh led the pursuit in the first instance, but there is no sign that he personally entered the sea. Indeed, xiv. 23 expressly limits the entry into the sea to all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Merneptah was certainly not drowned in the Red Sea; but neither was Amenhotep II. We have his mummy which is still in his tomb at Thebes. A photograph of its head may be found on a plate facing page 326 of the second edition of

J. H. Breasted's "History of Egypt." "Dying about 1420 B.C., after a reign of some twenty-six years, he was interred like his ancestors in the valley of the kings' tombs, where his body rests to this day" (p. 327). Certainly death after a reign of twenty-six years would not fit in with the chronology of the Exodus narrative either, since it is impossible to suppose that twenty-six years elapsed between the death of the Pharaoh of the oppression and the Exodus. And we shall see later that to place the event in the reign of Amenhotep II. is to reduce the early chapters of Exodus to the level of fiction on quite other grounds.

Consequently we may be sure that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was not drowned in the Red Sea, and that no support can be derived from the text of Ex. xiv. f. for any theory that the narrative relates to Amenhotep II.

This, therefore, leaves us confronted with the one single argument from 1 Kings vi. 1.

This verse is regarded by Wellhausen, Stade, Burney, and Howlett (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. "Chronology") as a gloss. The reasons urged are the divergence of the LXX and the artificial character of the number. The Septuagintal text exhibits considerable differences. Taking the readings of B, we find the following statements in the order given:—

v. 15 [=Heb. 29] And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; 16 [=Heb. 30] besides rulers (genitive) that (or of those that) were set over the works of Solomon, three thousand six hundred overseers (nominative) that wrought (nominative participle) the works. 17 [=Heb. 32b] And they prepared the timbers and the stones for three years. vi. 1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and fortieth year of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, in the fourth year, in the second month of the reign of King Solomon over Israel, 2 [=Heb. v. 31] And they raise great costly stones, for the foundation of the house, and hewed stones, 3 [=Heb. 32a] And the sons [for "builders" by a different vowel punctua-

tion] of Solomon and the sons of Hiram hewed and laid them. 4 [=Heb. vi. 37] In the fourth year he founded the house of the Lord in the month Nels, even the second month, 5 [=Heb. vi. 38] In the eleventh year in the month Baad [a corruption of Baal, Δ for A], this is the eighth month, was the house finished according to all its tale and all its fashion.

The text then proceeds with the Hebrew vi. 2, 3, 14, 4-10, 15, etc., with variations which do not here concern us.

We need not enter on the evidence of glossing shown by the grammar and phraseology.

The reasons advanced for regarding vi. 1 as late are the following: It is claimed that the continuity of vi. 36 and vii. 1-12 in the Hebrew is broken by the insertion of vi. 37, 38a. If, on the other hand, the correct position of those verses is where the LXX places them, verse 1 becomes superfluous. Further, verse 1 uses חרש for month in place of the חר of verses 37 f. The number 480 is artificial, representing twelve generations (or eleven if the Septuagintal 440 be preferred) of forty years each. This of course is in accordance with the view that Aaron to Zadok represented twelve generations (1 Chron. vi. 3-8).

To these considerations may be added the fact that HP 71 actually omits vi. 1.

So much as to the textual grounds. It must, however, be remembered that there are historical reasons of the first magnitude. It is not possible in reality to hold that a generation was as long as forty years on the average. And if the number 480 or 440 be taken as literally historical in an arithmetical sense, the statements as to the building of Pithom and Raamses, the vivid narrative of the brick making, and the whole of the history of the Mosaic period in Egypt, which depends on the proximity of the seat of the court under Rameses II. and Merneptah, must be sacrificed. Nor will the

narrative of the conquest be intelligible. Let us look more closely at these points.

"Every point in the story of the insurrection is written upon the ruins at Pithom, despite all attempts to discredit the discoveries of Naville there. I have carefully examined the results of his work on the ground and have found every item of it correct. I would be glad to go over the ruins with any one who is skeptical concerning those discoveries. The place was called 'Pithom'; it was a 'store city'; the bricks were laid in 'mortar,' contrary to the usual Egyptian method of brick work; the bricks in the lower courses were well filled with good clean straw, those of the middle courses were made with stubble mixed with weeds and all pulled up by the roots, while the bricks of the upper courses were made of Nile mud without the admixture of any binding material whatever; and all these things are to be found in the ancient region of 'Succoth' as the Bible asserts" (Kyle, *Bib. Sac.*, Jan., 1917, p. 10).

This testimony would in itself be conclusive. Added to what has been collected in the article on "The Date of the Exodus" it is overwhelming. But it is not all.

It needs no argument to show that the Biblical narratives postulate an Egyptian capital or capitals near Goshen. This makes impossible the assignment of the events recorded in them to any period in which Thebes was the capital. That is one reason why the story of Joseph is seen to relate to the age of the Hyksos, which satisfies this necessary condition. But the reign of Amenhotep II. and any other post-Hyksos age before Rameses II. to which it may be sought to assign the Exodus does not fulfill the requirements. Here is the testimony of Breasted:—

"The dominance of Egypt in Asiatic affairs had irresistibly drawn the center of power on the Nile from Thebes to the Delta. Ikhnaton had rudely broken with the tradition of the Empire that the Pharaoh must reside at Thebes. It is probable that Harmhab returned thither, but we have seen that after the rise of the Nineteenth Dynasty Seti I was obliged to spend the early part of his reign in the North, and we find him residing for months in the Delta. Rameses II's projects of conquest in Asia finally forced

the entire abandonment of Thebes as the royal residence. It remained the religious capital of the state, and at the greater feasts in its temple calendar the Pharaoh was often present, but his permanent residence was in the north. . . . Somewhere in the eastern Delta he founded a residence city, Per-Ramses, or 'House of Ramses.' Its location is not certain, although it has often been thought to be identical with Tanis; but it must have been close to the eastern frontier, for a poet of the time singing of its beauties refers to it as being between Egypt and Syria. . . . Per-Ramses became the seat of government and all records of state were deposited there" (History of Egypt [2d ed.], pp. 442 f.).

This shows clearly that if we insist on referring the events of the early chapters of Exodus to the reigns of Thothmes III. and Amenhotep II. we must regard them as totally unhistorical. Not only so, but we must suppose that by some caprice of fortune they have acquired the historical dress of a later period, with the detailed events and character of which they minutely correspond.

Coming now to the period of the conquest, we may quote Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie's description of the state of Syria:—

"Before we can understand the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites we must note the condition of the land at that time. Syria had long been subject to Egypt. King Aahmes in 1582 B.C. had entered the south at Sharuhén, after ejecting the Hyksos; and Tahutmes I had acquired the whole country up to the Euphrates by about 1530. Fifty years later began the systematic plunder of Syria by raids and tribute, fourteen expeditions being recorded by Tahutmes III, between 1481 and 1462 B.C.; these cleared the country of all the valuables, and even of the crops. We see from the annals how high a civilization there was among the Syrians; the metal vases, which are the principal objects of record, are finer than those which the Egyptians were making, and the Syrian artists were brought to work in Egypt. Each succeeding king kept his hold on the country as tributary, until it revolted under the weak reign of Amenhotep IV, about 1370 B.C. Sety I reconquered the whole up to the Euphrates in 1326, and his son, Ramesses II, continued to hold it till at least 1292 or later. He afterwards lost his hold, but the south was regained up to Tyre in 1230 by Merenptah. Though lost again in the weak reigns of his successors, Pal-



estine was reconquered in 1195 by Rameses III, when he crushed the Amorites. After this there was a long peace on the Egyptian border till Shishak in 933 plundered Judæa; and this interval between 1195 and 933 must comprise the early history of the Israelites in Canaan.

"The frequent plundering by warfare and draining by tribute must have exhausted the country very seriously; and under Rameses III, the great league headed by the Amorites called forth all the possible reserves of wealth. All this was finally wrecked by the defeat, which left Rameses free to massacre and plunder everything of his enemies' which he could find. It was no wonder if, after such exhaustion, the country could not repel the band of hardy desert warriors which burst in from Moab under Joshua. The manner in which the land had been bled is shown by the absence of all gold and silver in the spoils taken by the Israelites, except a small quantity on the eastern border of Jericho" (*Egypt and Israel* [1911], pp. 50 f.).

This shows us the historical preparation of the land for the Israelite conquest. We see too how impossible it would be to fit that conquest and the subsequent history of the people into the conditions of any earlier period. For these reasons it is certain that 1 Kings vi. 1 cannot be historically true in the arithmetical sense. We shall, however, see reason to believe that it is founded on a genuine historical tradition.

The ancient Hebrews had no fixed era for chronological purposes. During the kingdom we find the system of dating by the years of the king's reign, as is shown by the ostraca discovered at Samaria (see ISBE,<sup>1</sup> p. 2231), as well as by passages in the Old Testament. We also have dating by outstanding events (e.g. "two years before the earthquake," Amos i. 1; "Hebron was built seven years before Zoan," Num. xiii. 22). Shorter spaces of time were often reckoned by the number of years, but of long periods only one figure is trustworthy, the 430 years of Ex. xii. 40. That is supported by the following considerations: (1) it is not a multiple of forty;

<sup>1</sup> I use this abbreviation for the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*.

(2) it appears to have been in an old text and to have given rise by erroneous inference to the assigning of 215 years to the period from the call of Abraham to the entry into Egypt;<sup>1</sup> (3) it is sustained by the earlier importance of Raamses in the Hyksos period to which Joseph belongs and the location of the Hyksos capital; and (4) we have a stela erected by an official of Rameses II., named Seti, which "is dated in the four hundredth wear of King Opehtiset-Nubti, a Hyksos ruler. This remarkable fact shows that the reign of this king began an era—the only one known in Egypt—which had survived in use at Tanis into the Ramessid times" (Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii. p. 227). The Israelites were therefore not reduced in this case to reliance on any era or reckoning of their own.

On the other hand, the Hebrews had two substitutes for exact chronology. One of these was the number forty. The excellent article on "Number" by William Taylor Smith may be quoted:—

"The use of definite numerical expressions in an indefinite sense, that is, as round numbers, which is met with in many languages, seems to have been very prevalent in Western Asia from early times to the present day. Sir. W. Ramsay (*Thousand and One Churches*, 6) remarks that the modern Turks have 4 typical numbers which are often used in proper names with little or no reference to their exact numerical force—3, 7, 40, 1,001. The Lycian district which gives the book its name is called *Bin Bir Kiliase*, 'The Thousand and One Churches,' although the actual number in the valley is only 28. The modern Persians use 40 in just the same way. 'Forty years' with them often means 'many years' (Brugsch, cited by König, *Stilistik*, 55). This lax use of numbers, as we think, was probably very frequent among the Israelites and their neighbors. The inscription on the Moabite Stone supplies a very instructive example. The Israelitish occupation of Medeba by Omri and his son for half the reign of the latter is there reckoned (ll. 7 f.) at 40 years. As, according to 1 Kings xvi. 23, 29, the period extended to only 23 years at the most, the number

<sup>1</sup> See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1916, p. 478.

40 must have been used very freely by Mesha's scribe as a round number. It is probably often used in that way in the Bible where it is remarkably frequent, especially in reference to periods of days or years" (ISBE, p. 2158).

The nearest equivalent to a chronology was, however, provided by the use of the דור, or generation. "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again" (Gen. xv. 16); "This is my memorial unto all generations" (Ex. iii. 15); "Consider the years of generation and generation" (Deut. xxxii. 7); "All that generation were gathered to their fathers" (Judg. ii. 10), etc. The genealogies are in accord with this. They give records of generations normally without any years.

It must not be thought that in early times a generation was regarded as a space of forty years. On the contrary, we should probably consider this an inference of late commentators from the text "He made them wander in the wilderness forty years until all the generation . . . was consumed" (Num. xxxii. 13). Of course the sense is here different from that in which a generation is reckoned in counting time. Such a generation does not extend to the death of the last survivor of all the males of twenty years and upwards who may be living at a particular time, but (except in the case of the first and last generations of the series) from the birth of an eldest son to the birth of his eldest son.

What, then, was in fact the average length of such a generation? Professor Petrie has sought to discover it from the Jewish kings. "The period of eldest-son generation is best fixed by the certain series of Jewish kings, Rehoboam to Jehoiakin, sixteen generations in 937-598 years, or 339 years, averaging twenty-one years" (Egypt and Israel, p. 56).

Such a calculation can at best be only very rough. There will have been variations in different families. A royal

house is not necessarily typical of others, and something depends on the ages of the first and last members of the series at the particular dates (in this instance the Exodus and the foundation of the Temple). But let us take the twenty-one years and see what happens. The date of the Exodus was not earlier than 1233 nor later than 1223 (Bib. Sac., July, 1916, p. 467). Allow 252 years for the twelve generations and we reach a date between 981 and 971 B.C. The following are some dates that have been given for the fourth year of Solomon by recent writers: 969, Mack (ISBE, p. 641); 977 or 974, Oettli (Geschichte Israels [1905]); 968 or 984 or 958, Guthe (Geschichte des Volkes Israel [1899]); 984, Caldecott (Murray's Illustrated Bible Dictionary [1908]); 974, Petrie (Egypt and Israel [1911]); 974, Kittel (art. "Zeitrechnung" in Real-encyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche [1908]); 969, Benzinger (Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (vol. i. [1909])); 972, Lehmann-Haupt (Israel [1911]).

In view of the surprising agreement of these dates with the rough reckoning by generations, I cannot but think that the Massoretic text of 1 Kings vi. 1 rests on a true tradition that twelve generations elapsed from the Exodus to the foundation of the Temple, although the verse itself is clearly the work of a late glossator who took forty years to be the length of a generation. The Septuagintal number 440 is presumably based on a genealogical list which contained only eleven names either because the average generation in the family to which it related was a couple of years longer, or because the first and last members were of different ages at the material dates from those on whom the Massoretic text relied, or because one name had fallen out.

It must be remembered that if the commencement of the period has been reached through Egyptian data, the end is reckoned from Assyrian synchronisms with Old Testament history.

On this basis the period from the death of Moses to the accession of David is, in round numbers, 170 years. Greater precision cannot be attained till fresh archæological facts are forthcoming.<sup>1</sup>

This brings us to the period of the Judges.

It is well known that if all the numbers of the Massoretic text be taken arithmetically and regarded as consecutive, the period covered by the Book of Judges alone amounts to 390 or 410 years according as Samson's rule of twenty years in the days of the Philistines is or is not included in the forty years of Philistine oppression. Here are the data:—

<sup>1</sup> A strange fancy should be mentioned. The list of Edomite kings in Gen. xxxvi. 31 ff.; 1 Chron. i. 43 ff. begins with Bela, son of Beor, of Dinhabah. A slight alteration of the name, made with no textual authority whatever, turns this into Balaam, son of Beor. The bearer is then identified with the Balaam of Num. xxii. (Lehmann-Haupt, Israel, pp. 30, 32 f.). On this basis Balaam becomes a king of Edom in the age of Moses! It is then calculated that thirty years should be allowed for a reign, making 240 years for the eight kings, the last of the series, Hadad II. (1 Chron. i. 50), being identified with David's contemporary. But (1) Bela is not Balaam; (2) Bela's city was Dinhabah, Balaam's Pethor; (3) Bela ruled over Edom, Balaam came from Aram-naharaim; (4) Bela was a king, Balaam a soothsayer; (5) We do not know of a single point of contact between their careers.

This is an instance of the sort of history built on chance resemblances and a total indifference to all known facts that has done so much harm to Biblical studies.

For the rest there is nothing in the list of Edomite kings that will not fit the date of the Exodus, but we have no means of determining either the date of commencement or the average length of the reigns.

JUDGES.		YEARS.
iii. 8	Cushan-rishathaim	8
11	Rest under Othniel	40
14	Eglon	18
30	Rest after Ehud's exploit	80
31	After him Shamgar	No time specified
iv. 3	Jabin	20
v. 31	Rest	40
vi. 1	Midianite forays	7
viii. 28	Rest under Gideon	40
ix. 22	Abimelech's reign	3
x. 2	Tola	23
3	Jair	22
8	Ammonite oppression	18
xii. 7	Jephthah	6
9	Ibzan	7
11	Elon	10
14	Abdon	8
xiii. 1	Philistine oppression	40
xv. 20, xvi. 31	Samson	20

To these must be added some time for Joshua and his generation (ii. 7-10). On the theory that a generation was forty years, that would be the space of time required.<sup>1</sup> In addition Eli judged Israel forty (M.T.) or twenty (LXX) years (1 Sam. iv. 18), Samuel claims an unspecified time, which is generally taken as twenty years on the evidence of 1 Sam. vii. 2, and there is the reign of Saul, as to the length of which we have no information.

Before considering what light can be thrown on these figures it is necessary to devote some attention to the way in which they are generally treated. It is customary, on the basis of 1 Kings vi. 1, to postulate the existence of a scheme to which the author of the chronology of Judges is supposed

<sup>1</sup> Joshua is said to have lived to 110 years (Josh. xxiv. 29), and this is taken arithmetically by some. But "one hundred and ten, the age attained by Joseph (Gen. i. 22), is significant as the Egyptian ideal of longevity" (ISBE, p. 2162). This is probably the meaning in Joshua too, and we cannot venture to attach a literal significance to the expression.

to have conformed, according to which 480 years elapsed from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon. This involves adding in the forty years in the wilderness, the reign of David, and the opening years of Solomon's reign. As the total far exceeds 480, resort is had to various Procrustean devices to bring the number down. The discussion in recent years has been dominated by T. Nöldeke's paper on "Die Chronologie der Richterzeit" (*Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments* [1869], pp. 173-198). He cuts out all the years of foreign dominations, ninety-four in all, allowing twenty for the difference between the forty years of Philistine rule and the period of Samson's judgeship. The basis for this is the contention that in the East the years of foreign dominations were added to those of the legitimate rulers (pp. 193 f.), so that, e.g., Cushan-rishathaim's eight years would be included in Othniel's forty. Abimelech's three years are also left out of account, on the ground that he was not a legitimate ruler. This (allowing Samuel 20) makes a total of 440 years plus the unknown periods of Joshua and Saul for the whole epoch from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon.

G. F. Moore (*Judges* [1895], pp. xli. ff.) adopts this scheme in principle, but gives Eli twenty years (with the LXX) and cuts out Saul as an illegitimate ruler. He does not explain whether he regards the years of his rule after Samuel's death as included in David's short reign at Hebron.

Others excise the minor judges as not belonging to the original book.

To all such attempts the following considerations may be opposed:—

(1) If 1 Kings vi. 1 is a late gloss, it cannot have influenced the chronology of Judges. In any case there is not

a particle of evidence that the author of the book supposed that 480 years elapsed from the Exodus to the foundation of the Temple.

(2) It is impossible to reckon the periods of oppression in the periods of rest for arithmetical reasons. The Ammonite oppression lasted eighteen years, but the deliverer Jephthah judged for only six years. If the eighteen are included in the six, the part is three times as great as the whole. Similarly the Philistine oppression of forty years cannot be reckoned in Samson's twenty.

(3) Chapter ix. is an important integral portion of the book and cannot be cut out. It most distinctly represents Abimelech as subsequent to Gideon. Tola, on the other hand, is clearly said to have arisen after Abimelech (x. 1). If language has any meaning, Abimelech's rule is manifestly included in the scheme of the book.

(4) The author of Judges must be taken to have known the meaning of 40, 80, 20, as well as we do; and, in that case, he did not intend a strictly arithmetical interpretation to be placed on his language any more than Mesha can have done.

(5) We read more than once of the children of Israel's doing wrong. That cannot have been an instantaneous process, but must have taken some time. In the author's view it used to happen after the death of a judge (ii. 19), and involves an addition to the length of the periods.

(6) The theory takes no account of important Septuagintal variations.

(7) In two places (v. 6, x. 7), in addition to xv. 20, where Samson is said to have judged in the days of the Philistines, we are given to understand that some, at any rate, of the events narrated were contemporaneous, not consecutive.



Other attempts have been made to fit the data of the historical books into the number 480 on the basis, which in principle is much sounder, that some of the events overlap. The most recent of these is that of Mack (ISBE, pp. 641 f.). Many of the considerations which have been urged above against the theories of Nöldeke and his school are, however, fatal to his scheme; and, moreover, such a statement as "Ibzan began to judge contemporaneous with Elon" is directly contradicted by the language of xii. 8–11. Furthermore, he relies on the 300 years of xi. 26, which, as we have seen (Bib. Sac., July, 1916, pp. 478 f.), is due to a glossator.

A very different solution has been propounded by Professor Petrie and Mr. Caldecott. In the "Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology" for December, 1896, pp. 243–249, Petrie divided the data of Judges into "the histories of the North and Galilee, the East and Moab, and the West or Ephraim, and the Philistines," respectively. He claimed that—

"the construction of the periods of the Book of Judges is as follows:—

Judges	iii. 8	North	1st captivity and deliverance
"	iii. 14	East	1st captivity and deliverance
"	iv. 3	North	2d captivity and deliverance
"	vi. 1	West	1st captivity and deliverance
			continuing on into
"	x. 3	East	history to end
"	xii. 11	North	to end
"	xii. 14	West	to end

"The total period which results from this arrangement by localities is 118 years in North, 122 years in East, and 121 years in West."

He admits that the use of the number forty imports some uncertainty into these figures. His most recent table is given on page 55 of "Egypt and Israel" as follows:—

The Different Districts.

	North.	East.	West.
B.C.		B.C.	B.C.
		1152 Eglon of Moab 18 years (iii. 14).	1151 Midian holds up to Jezreel 7 years (vi. 1).
1148	Chushan of Na- haraim rules 8 years (iii. 8):		1144 Gideon delivers; rest 40 years (viii. 28).
1140	Othniel deliv- ers; rest 40 years (iii. 11).	1134 Ehud delivers; rest 80 years [including Jair below (iii. 30)].	1104 Abimelech king in Shechem 3 years (ix. 22). 1101 Tola judges 23 years (x. 2).
1100	Jabin rules by Sisera 20 years (iv. 3).		
1080	Sisera slain; rest 40 years (v. 31).	1076 Jair judges; 22 years rest (x. 3).	1078 Abdon judges 8 years in N. (xii. 14). Ibzan judges 7 years in S. (xii. 9).
		1054 Philistines and A m m o n op- press, 18 years (x. 8).	1070 Philistines oppress 40 years (xiii. 1), including Samson 20 years (xv. 20).
1040	Elon judges 10 years (xii. 11).	1036 Jephthah judg- es 6 years (xii. 7).	1050 and Samuel judg- es 20 years (1 Sam. iv. 4; vii. 2; 2 Sam. vi. 2).
1030	Saul.	1030 Saul.	1030 Saul.

Mr. Caldecott (Murray's Illustrated Bible Dictionary [1908], p. 157) has a similar scheme, dividing the judges into five groups instead of three.

Such theories have the great merit of proceeding from the archæological data and sweeping away the cobwebs that have been spun from 1 Kings vi. 1, but they suffer from certain

defects. Forty, its half (20), and its double (80) are taken too nearly in an arithmetical sense; the textual evidence is neglected; the Exodus is postdated; the statements of the Book of Judges as to one judge ruling after another are overlooked; Shamgar (in Petrie's scheme) and Eli (in both schemes) are omitted; insufficient time is allowed for the age of Samuel, having regard to the fact that Abiathar, the survivor of the Nob massacre, was the grandson of Ichabod's brother; and the tables produced contain an element of arbitrariness. They give an impression of far greater chronological exactness than is attainable. Nevertheless, they represent a great improvement on the work of Nöldeke and his followers.

While nothing like a strict chronology is possible for this period, we may, by a careful study of the available facts, at any rate enable ourselves to see how the historical events came to wear their present chronological appearance. Our first rule must be to put  $x$  for 40, and  $y$  for 20, so as to make it quite clear to ourselves that we are dealing with unknown quantities.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, we must take account of the important textual variations. Thirdly, we must follow the indications of the narrative.

Some of the readings of the LXX are clearly valueless. Thus in xii. 7 many authorities give Jephthah sixty years instead of six; xii. 11 f. (Elon) were omitted in the pre-Hexaplar text (obviously through homoeoteleuton, both 11 and 13 beginning with the same words), and in compensation many MSS. have fifty years' rest under Othniel. It is,

<sup>1</sup>The same holds good of the age of Moses. He was born during the reign of Rameses II., which lasted 66 or 67 years in all, and consequently cannot possibly have been 80 years old at the date of the Exodus in the second year of the succeeding Pharaoh, Merneptah.

however, noticeable that in xii. 11 the words "for ten years" are omitted by HP 237; and this variation may be important, for it cannot be explained so easily. We must, therefore, reckon with the possibility that Elon's ten years are not original.

. In chapter iii. verses 11, 12, and 13 are wanting altogether in HP 19.<sup>1</sup> Just let us examine the matter a little more closely. (1) That Othniel should have given the land forty years' rest before his death is improbable in view of the fact that he was a younger brother or nephew<sup>2</sup> of Caleb. Without taking the statement as to Caleb's age in Josh. xiv. 7, 10, in a literal arithmetical sense, we may point out that he was one of the spies in the third year of the Exodus and one of the two oldest men left in Israel at the death of Moses. Hence it is unlikely that a son-in-law of his lived through the period of Joshua and eight years of Cushan and then had as many as forty years before him. If 40(= $x$ ) is the correct text, it probably represents a small number in reality. But the strange order is very noticeable. Elsewhere words as to the death of the judge are not added to the statement of rest (iii. 30, v. 31, viii. 28). The verse is therefore suspicious. (2) Verse 12 contains nothing new. It is merely the usual formula. (3) The Ammonites and Amalekites of verse 13 make no further appearance in the narrative, which deals with Moab only. Nor is it clear how the Amalekites come to be in the neighborhood of Jericho.

On the whole, I think it likely that the Septuagintal MS. which omits these verses is right.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Præfatio ad Judices* and also *ad loc.* Brooke and McLean, however, quote  $b$  in this passage, possibly by a misprint for  $b$  ( $b$  and  $b'$ [=HP 19] together constitute  $b$ ). One of these MSS., 19 according to HP,  $b^*$  according to BM, has 8 for 18 in verse 14.

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew may mean either.

Another important reading occurs in iv. 1. The words "and Ehud was dead" were missing in the original LXX and added by Origen under the asterisk. They appear to represent a reader's gloss.

In iii. 30 for 80=2x, f has 70 (another unarithmetical figure, see below). In iv. 3 a, omits "twenty years." In x. 2 ej and HP 237 have twenty-two for twenty-three as the number of Tola's years, the Latin has seventy-three, and h has twenty; and in verse 3 e omits the words "and judged Israel twenty-two years" of Jair; while q gives him twenty-three years. In x. 8 m omits "eighteen years."

These variants, however, suggest a further point. According to the Massoretic text the minor judges are responsible for seventy years in all (Tola 23, Jair 22, Ibzan 7, Elon 10, Abdon 8). Now seventy has the look of a schematic number.

"*Seven multiplied by ten, or 70, was a very strong expression of multitude which is met with in a large number of passages in the Old Testament. It occurs of persons: the 70 descendants of Jacob (Ex. i. 5; Deut. x. 22); the 70 elders of Israel (Ex. xxiv. 1, 9; Num. xi. 16, 24 f.); the 70 kings ill treated by Adonibezek (Judg. i. 7); the 70 sons of Gideon (Judg. viii. 30; ix. 2); the 70 descendants of Abdon who rode on 70 ass-colts (Judg. xii. 14); the 70 sons of Ahab (2 Kings x. 1, 6 f.); and the 70 idolatrous elders seen by Ezekiel (Ezek. viii. 11). It is also used of periods: 70 days of Egyptian mourning for Jacob (Gen. l. 3); 70 years of trial (Isa. xxiii. 15, 17; Jer. xxv. 11 f.; Dan. ix. 2; Zec. i. 12; vii. 5); the 70 weeks of Daniel (Dan. ix. 24); and the 70 years of human life (Ps. xc. 10). Other noticeable uses of 70 are the 70 palm trees of Elim (Ex. xv. 27; Num. xxxiii. 9); the offering of 70 bullocks in the time of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxix. 32), and the offering by the heads of the tribes of 12 silver bowls each of 70 shekels (Num. vii. 13 ff.)."* (ISBE, pp. 2160 f.)

It seems most likely, therefore, that the seventy years of the minor judges are due to an editor, and that Jair and Elon,

like Shamgar, originally had no numbers, while Tola may have had 20=y. Whether the numbers assigned to Ibzan and Abdon are original it is impossible to say. Certainly 7 is often used in a non-arithmetical sense, and consequently Ibzan's 7 may be original and yet not arithmetical.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, it is not improbable that an editor found some numbers in the text and then made additions to bring them up to a total of 70. The Greek variants enable us to go behind his work.

In arranging our facts we must be careful to note that the book itself falls into divisions which are not necessarily consecutive, while within those divisions we have indications of successive periods of time.

The data of the Book of Judges for the epoch after Joshua's generation fall into six groups (in addition to the appendices).

- A iii. 7-10 Sin, 8 years' service to Cushan, delivery by Othniel (on 11-13, see above).
- B iii. 14-31 Service to Moab 18 (*v. l.* 8) years, delivery by Ehud, rest for 80 (=2x) (*v. l.* 70) years: succession of Shamgar to Ehud.
- C iv. 1-v. 31 Renewed sin, oppression by Jabin for 20 (=y) (*v. l.* no specified number of) years: rise of Deborah in the days of Shamgar (*v. l.* 6): rest for 40 (=x) years (*v. l.* 31).
- D vi. 1-x. 5 Sin (not stated to be *again*), oppression by Midian for 7 years, delivery by Gideon, 40 (=x) years' rest in the days of Gideon, Abimelech's reign of 3 years: Tola judges after Abimelech for 23 (*v. l.* 22 and 20) years: *after* him Jair judges for 22 (*v. l.* 23) years (but according to e he merely lived after Tola and is not said to have judged. Certainly *ver. l.* 4 only makes him a countryside notable).

<sup>1</sup>But in xii. 9 y\* has 6 and a, 3, so that 7 is probably not original.

**E x. 6-xii. 15** Renewed sin followed by Philistine (see F) and Ammonite oppression. The latter lasts 18 (or an unspecified number of) years and extends to all trans-Jordanic Israel in the land of Gilead. Jephthah judges for 6 years: *after* him Ibzan of Bethlehem for 7 (*v. U.* 6 and 3) years: *after* him Elon the Zebulonite 10 years (but according to one Greek MS. no years are specified): *after* him Abdon the Pirathonite judged for 8 years.

**F xiii. 1-xvi. 31** Renewed sin: 40(= $x$ ) years' oppression by the Philistines during which Samson judges for 20(= $y$ ) years.

It will be seen that, apart from sin, the periods of years covered by the various divisions can be shown thus:—

**A** 8

**B** 18 (*v. l.* 8)+2 $x$

**C**  $y$  (or *nil*)+ $x$

**D** 7+ $x$ +3+23 (or 22 or 20= $y$ )+22 (or 23 or *nil*)=55+ $x$ , or 32+ $x$ , or 10+ $x$ + $y$

**E** 18 (or *nil*)+6+7 (or 6 or 3)+10 (or *nil*)+8=49 or 39 or 31 or 30 or 27 or 17

**F**  $x$

It has been assumed that in these cases seven may be taken numerically, though this is far from certain. In any case the exact figure can make little difference where the number is as small as seven.

We know that, in the view of the author, B and C, and E and F, certainly overlapped. Probably the Philistine oppression began before the Ammonite (cp. x. 6), though it may have been narrated later because the first real break in it was the battle of Ebenezer (1 Sam. iv. 11-14).

It is, however, to be observed that, while we are given definite information that suggests overlapping in the cases of B and C and E and F, we are given no information that would forbid further overlapping. In reality there is no

reason why A and B should not have synchronized in part, or B, C, and D, or D and F. The narratives of the book are given in a series of divisions. Within each division we know that a certain order of events is postulated, but except in the instances mentioned we are given no clue by the author to the chronological interrelation of the divisions.

We may now consider the groups a little more in detail. I have already shown that if Othniel was really the younger contemporary of Caleb, the total amount of time consumed by A cannot represent a long period after the conquest.<sup>1</sup>

The inclusion of Shamgar ben Anath in B has given rise to much discussion. He is not said to have judged Israel, but only to have saved it; and there is nothing antecedently improbable in that.

It is, however, urged that his name is foreign. Anath was a heathen goddess who was worshiped in Syria and Palestine, and Shamgar is not a Hebrew name. It bears some resemblance to the Hittite Sangara. Our text does not, however, say that Shamgar belonged to any Israelite tribe. In the early period of the history there was no marked objection to non-Israelite peoples other than certain specified races. Shamgar may have belonged to the foreign elements of the very mixed population. As to Anath it is not impossible that the name was originally even more pronouncedly heathen, and that some part of it attributing to Anath divinity or some other attribute that offended the editors has been dropped.

<sup>1</sup>The argument is independent of the question of the identity of Cushan-rishathaim, king of Aram-naharaim. Some (e.g. G. A. Cooke, *Judges* [1913], p. 37) contend that Aram is a corruption of Edom, and naharaim an addition. This is mere guesswork; and it is sought to buttress it by making the Edomites Midianites, which is most improbable. There was no Edomite king with any name at all resembling Cushan-rishathaim during this period, as we know from the list in Gen. xxxvi. 31-39.



Consequently the names do not appear to support any contention.

But it is said (e.g. by Cooke, *ad loc.*, and Macalister, *The Philistines* [1913], p. 41) that he "was unknown to the author of iv. 1, who passes at once from Ehud to Deborah." This will not hold water in view of the fact that the original LXX omitted the gloss "and Ehud was dead." Nor should we conclude that he was unknown to the glossator, since he is mentioned in the song of Deborah. The inference should rather be that the glossator supposed the occurrences of chapter iv. to have taken place after the death of Ehud, but, as v. 6 expressly asserts, in the days of Shamgar.

In order to relieve the difficulty created for the theory by this last verse, its advocates suggest, without any textual evidence, that the words "in the days of Jael" are a gloss, and that the Shamgar, the son of Anath, to whom the song refers, was really an oppressor, not a deliverer. This again is pure guesswork of an improbable type. As it stands, the song is clear enough. Even a Shamgar and a Jael were powerless to deliver till the rise of Deborah. It gives her luster by comparison with the most famous of her contemporaries. Cooke, however, even goes so far as to make Shamgar "perhaps the predecessor of Sisera" (p. 57). If he was, at what moment did Sisera succeed him? Was it at the exact time that Deborah arose? Such fancies rest on nothing, and really do not call for serious attention.

"Further, an exploit against the Philistines in the period between Ehud and Deborah comes too early; the Philistines do not appear in history as enemies of Israel till the time of Saul (in the Samson story they are not yet the aggressors)." (Cooke, *Judges*, p. 48.) How about 1 Sam. iv.-vii.? And

is it not clear that from Judg. x. 7 onwards we are given to understand that there was more or less chronic hostility between the Philistines and the Israelites? Does it not appear from the language of Judg. xiii. 5 that before Samson's birth the Israelites were already in the hands of the Philistines?

Now let us consider how far a conflict at some time between Ehud and Deborah can be said to be too early. We have seen that the period from the death of Moses to the accession of David was about 170 years, or eight generations. At the beginning of that period we have the rule of Joshua, which must have lasted some years, followed, presumably at some interval, by eighteen years of Eglon's oppression. Then come Ehud and, after him, Shamgar. There are too many unknown quantities in this list for us to express any definite opinion as to the time required, but it would clearly cover a considerable number of our 170 years. On the other hand, reckoning back from David we find that his priest Abiathar, who was young but already of an age to use the ephod at, or soon after, the time of the massacre at Nob (1 Sam. xxii. 20; xxiii. 6, 9), was the grandson of a brother of Ichabod (1 Sam. xiv. 3; xxii. 20). The last-named was born after the death of Eli, whose grandson he was (1 Sam. iv. 19 ff.), so that Abiathar was the great-great-grandson of Eli. This involves the lapse of a considerable stretch of time between the battles related in 1 Sam. iv. and the accession of David. But these were not the beginning of the friction between Israel and the Philistines, for much of the oppression during which Samson played a leading part fell earlier. Nor is there any ground for supposing that Samson's death was immediately followed by the defeats of Eli's sons. There may have been an interval of some years. Again, the language of Judg. xiii. 5 suggests clearly that the Philistine op-

pression had begun before Samson's birth. It must therefore have covered a long period in all. For these reasons I cannot see any chronological difficulty whatever. The sequence as given to us by the sources appears to be (with many gaps and perhaps some overlapping), Joshua, Eglon, Ehud, Shamgar, Philistine oppression, Samson, Eli, Samuel, Saul (David). I can see no ground for doubting that these (with some interstices) covered eight generations.

But, then, it is further urged that as some Greek authorities repeat the verse about Shamgar after Samson (xvi. 31), we should transfer it to that position (Cooke, *ad loc.*; Macalister, *Philistines*, p. 41). This, however, is impossible, because it involves either postulating *two* Shamgars — one before Deborah and the other after Samson — or else removing Jabin and Deborah to the days of Eli and Samuel. The Greek variant is easily explicable on the hypothesis that a glossator noticed the Philistines, and thought that, as Samson was said to be the *first* to deliver Israel from them, Shamgar must necessarily be later.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, had this verse and chapters iv. and v. originally stood later, their transposition to their present place would be inexplicable. The truth seems to be that Shamgar's exploit occurred at a time before the Philistines had succeeded in overrunning any part of Israel, and the verse about Samson's delivering Israel refers to the period of Philistine rule, not to the previous time of independence.

Thus when the known facts are carefully considered, it is impossible to see any chronological difficulty in divisions A, B, C, and F. On the other hand, a strict chronology of the

<sup>1</sup> Macalister (p. 41, n.) also draws attention to Greek variants for Anath. They all, however, rest on well-known Greek scribal errors, such as Δ or Λ for Α, and give no ground for assuming a different Hebrew.

period offering actual dates of some era for the various important events seems impossible.

There remain divisions D and E. We must begin by noticing the terms of 1 Sam. vii. 16 f., according to which Samuel used to judge Israel at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, while making his home at Ramah. Clearly he did not touch Ephraim and the North or the country East of the Jordan.

It is therefore possible that there is an element of truth in the view that our divisions may have been partly contemporaneous with Samuel. It is of course impossible to say that any particular judge other than Samuel was actually in power till the beginning of Saul's reign. Interregna appear to be characteristic of the whole period. But there seems no reason for denying that some of the leaders mentioned in the Book of Judges may have been contemporaries of Eli and Samuel.

When we come to consider the length of time covered by D and E, we find that D gave us  $55+x$ , or  $32+x$ , or  $10+x+y$  years as a minimum, and E 49 or 39 or some smaller number according to the readings chosen. As already indicated, I think smaller numbers, generally speaking, more original. It is easy to understand the process of expansion, but difficult to see why existing numbers should have been omitted if authentic. Moreover, the words lacking in the Greek verse relating to Jair have all the appearance of an addition.<sup>1</sup>

Problems that on our present materials are insoluble cluster round the notice of Jair. According to the Pentateuch, Jair, a Manassite, took the villages and called them Havvoth

<sup>1</sup>In either case the chronological difficulty vanishes once it is realized that D and E may have overlapped. For instance, the Ammonite oppression and Jephthah may have coincided with Tola or Jair and the preceding history.

Jair (Num. xxxii. 41, Deut. iii. 14). In Judg. x. 4 they are so called after the sons of Jair the Gileadite. That there should have been two Jairs in different generations in the same family is altogether probable. But the place name must have been given after one *or* the other. Some hold that the conquest of Havvoth Jair took place in the time of the judges. As it is expressly assigned to Jair in the Mosaic age, and as the Jair who lived later is not associated with any warlike operation, it would seem more likely that the Mosaic Jair conquered the territory, and that the notice in Judges is due to an erroneous later gloss. The second Jair appears to have been merely a local celebrity and may even have lived in the days of the Midianite oppression.

To sum up the results of our consideration of the period, we may say that there is no reason whatever to question the sufficiency of a series of eight generations for all that is stated to have happened between the death of Moses and the reign of David. When the Book of Judges is carefully examined in the light of its own statements and the textual material, it is obvious that the main contents fall into six divisions between which there is overlapping. While the figures of the oppressions may in most cases be true in their arithmetical sense, there is no ground for assuming the same of any major judge except Jephthah, and there are good textual reasons for doubting the originality of the numbers assigned to at least three of the minor judges. The three years of Abimelech may be accepted as historical. The language used in most cases implies merely an undefined number of years in accordance with Semitic usage.

No more exact chronology is at present possible. Indeed, the most cursory reader of the book must see that it is not a

history of the period, but rather a collection of episodes. Thus, for example, we know nothing whatever about the fighting involved in any of the conquests of Israel noticed. Again, we have no guarantee that within the various divisions individual judges may not have been misplaced. On the other hand, we have learned with certainty that there is nothing in the true text of the book that in any way conflicts with the approximate dates given by archæology for the beginning and the end of the period.