

21 Dophkah

Names (also known as)

Dophkah
 Wadi Sih ⁽¹⁾
 Serabit el-Khadem(im) ⁽³⁾

Etymology

(Strong’s H1850 *dophqâh*) knocking (hence perhaps mining activity with hammers/picks); from (Strong’s H1849 *dâphaq*) to beat or knock violently and is translated as “overdrive” Gen. 33:13; “beat” (at the door) Judges 19:22; “knocketh” (at the door) Song 5:2. Possibly a variation of the Egyptian *mafkat* or turquoise. ⁽³⁾

Wadi Sih - Arabic: flowing waters ⁽¹⁾

Location/Description



As the Rephidim and Mt Sinai are located further south east, Dophkah needs to be located south or east from the Red Sea. There are three routes to enter eastward to the Sinai range both to gebel Serfah and gebel Safsafah/Musa. The most northern is Wadi Humr, then wadi Sidri and Wadi Feiran. ⁽²⁾

The first was the route taken by Robinson, it is a wide valley with inscriptions found at Ain Sukhnah 40 km south of Suez at its mouth.

Located in Wadi Sih, a day’s journey from Wadi Nasb. ⁽⁴⁾ Travel south from here would pass an ancient Egyptian settlement at

Sarabit el Khadim where inscriptions bear evidence of an early small Egyptian settlement involved with mining. ^(1b)

Brief history

Both Dophkah and Alush are omitted from the Exodus record.

It is thought that Joshua was enslaved here in the Egyptian mines, and that a local conflict led to his escape. Whether this is true or not, Joshua is only mentioned after this location.

Turquoise

The Egyptian word for turquoise is *mfk’t* a similar sounding word to the Hebrew (Strong’s H5306 *nôphek*) used in Ex. 28:18; 39:11 for the emerald used in the high priest’s breastplate. Elsewhere it is found in Ezek. 27:16; 28:13 used as an international commodity. It is translated as ‘turquoise’ by NIV, NRSV and other modern translations.

The temple of Hathor

In conjunction with the mines at Serabit, there is a vast temple complex to Hathor. Constructed in a similar fashion to the Tabernacle, and the temple of Philae, there is a general area, priestly location and a holy shrine where incense altars can still be seen today. Hathor, the Egyptian god of happiness was the god who resolved the conflict between Set and Hor by making herself naked before Ra, and formed the basis of new years festivities. Her actions became the basis for the golden calf, only two stations from this encampment.

Scriptural references

Old Testament

Num. 33:12,13

New Testament

None

Archaeology

Montuhotep IV circa 1970-1963 BC - a text describing an expedition of 3,000 men through Wadi Humr to gather turquoise from Serabit. ⁽²⁾

Amenemhet I circa 1996 BC - a text describing expedition of 4,000 men through wadi Humr. ⁽²⁾

Other reference materials

- (1) Fausset's bible dictionary vol.1 pg. 805 (1b) 806;
- (2) James Hoffmeier; Ancient Israel in Sinai, the evidence for the authenticity of the wilderness pg. 165;
- (3) Avraham Negev; Archaeological encyclopaedia of the Holy Land pg. 144;
- (4) Barne's notes on the Bible vol. 2 pg. 64;
- (5) The lands of the Bible, visited and described in an extensive... John Wilson vol. 2 pg. 767.



(Compiler – Peter Boon)