

The Exodus crossing

It is a pleasure to have Brother John Mitchell writing again in the *Testimony*. Part 11 of his series “Moses: earth’s meekest man”, “The journey begins” ([Jun. 2007, p. 179](#)), prompts me to write and forward some evidence regarding the site of the Exodus crossing.

I have had in my possession for some years a copy of a chart of the Red Sea ([Chart 1](#)) as surveyed in September 1848 by Lieutenant W. C. Barker of the Indian Navy, with soundings of the sea bed at the top of the Suez arm of the Red Sea before the construction of the Suez Canal and the deepening of this section.

What is fascinating is that he has indicated a wide strip of sand across the head of the Gulf with mud and clay either side. The width scales at just over one mile wide, stretching from Ras Ataka on the west side to just above Ayoun Mousa (Moses’ Wells) on the east side. What I find important as a civil engineer is that you can easily walk across wet sand, but wet mud and silt would be impassable. If with the returning waters the sand fluidised, it would then become impassable to the Egyptian chariots, as Exodus 14:24,25 indicates: “the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off

their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily [clogging their chariot wheels, ESV]”.

The location of Ras Ataka is significant, too. A recent Admiralty chart of the area shows a range of hills coming in very close to the edge of the Red Sea some way to the south of the crossing point. Here then we have a classic location for the encampment of the children of Israel, as Exodus 14:1,2 tells us: “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea”.

It is no wonder that the Almighty, in setting up the scenario, says, “For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in” (v. 3). Here were Israel encamped before the Red Sea on their east side with the hills trapping them on the south side, while Pharaoh and his chariots came down and hemmed them in on the north and west sides.

That we can have confidence in this story goes without saying, supported now from the collected survey evidence. But the wisdom of the Ruler of heaven and earth is evident in the preparation made long ago in the geology of the Suez area for this event.

David Noakes
Peterborough

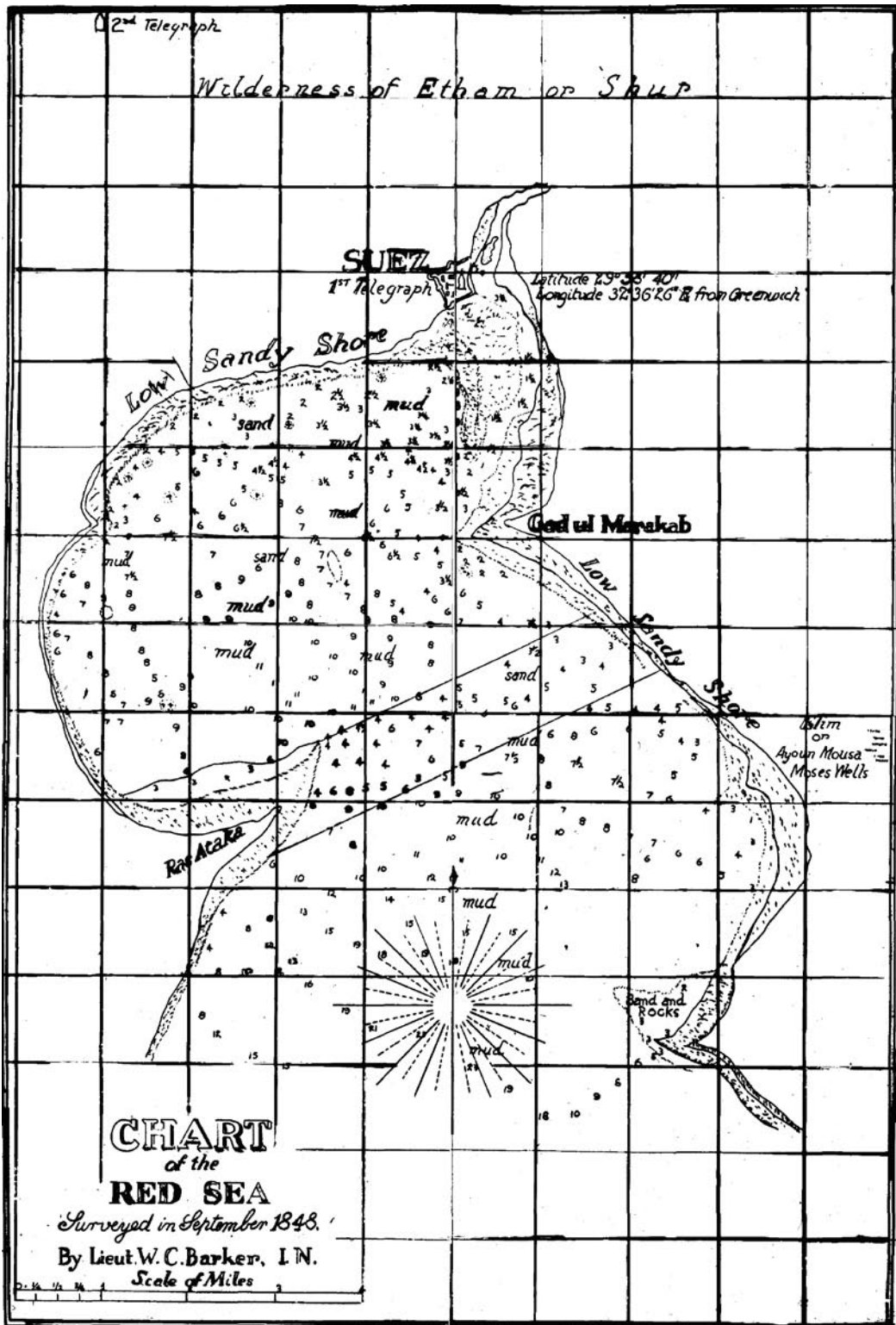


Chart 1. Red Sea Survey of 1848