Focus: The focus for this paper within Exodus 1:11B is on the word Raamses as it is rendered in the ESV. As noted last week, this verse has been used as a chronological indicator for the exodus from Egypt and the follow-on conquest of Canaan. In order to validate this usage, a detailed examination of Ex 1:11 and other verses is necessary.

Beginning Point: The Hebrew word with its vowel markers translated as Raamses is רַעְמְסֵס. However, this is the only occurrence of רַעְמְסֵס in the Masoretic Text. There are an additional four verses (Ex 12:37, Nu 33:3, 5 and Ge 47:11) where the same lemma, but with different vowel markings results in a translation of Rameses (Note the subtle difference). The question that comes to mind here is why did the Masoretic Text assign a different set of vowel markings to the lemma used in Ex 1:11. Or to ask it in a different manner, is the translation here as Raamses the correct translation? It is interesting that the same set of vowel markers are used for the Ge 47:11 lemma, discussing events that occurred some 400 years earlier as for the other three lemmas that are in Ex 12:37 and Nu 33:3, 5. This should be investigated!

Potential Fallacies: During this analysis, it is tempting to state that these five instances should be translated and interpreted the same; that is, all five renderings should be either Raamses or Rameses, since the Hebrew lemma even with the vowel markings sound similar. Awareness of this potential fallacy should be enough to prevent such a declaration. Rather, the analysis will be based on a word study that shall determine whether there has been some translational error. Other fallacies such as the "root", homograph", or "core meaning" are not applicable as the word does not lend itself to these types of fallacies.

Hebrew Word Study: The potential gloss renderings have been enumerated above as Raamses and four times as Rameses.   In many alternative translations Ex 1:11 is translated as Raamses. However, in the HCSB and others (Darby Bible (1890), NRSB, NIT, LEX, etc.) it is translated as Rameses. Within these scriptures, the semantic range of the lemma is limited to either reflecting a city or a region. Additionally, the lemma occurs only in the Pentateuch (specifically, Gen (1x), Exodus (2X), and Num (2x). From a grammatical and syntax standpoint, the lemma is an absolute definite proper noun that is conjoined with another absolute definite proper noun (Pithom). The syntax correlation of these absolute nouns with a construct noun "store cities" will be investigated in the next section.

From the above, some initial thoughts center around why are some translations rendering רַעְמְסֵס as Raamses; whereas others are rendering it as Rameses. Also, why are the vowel markings different for the Ex 1:11 lemma than the other four instances of the lemma.

The Nouns: As noted above, both Raamses and Pithom are absolute definite proper nouns associated with the construct noun "store cities." While there are a multitude of possible interpretations for the X of Y phrase "store cities, Pithom and Raamses"[1] only one makes sense. These possible interpretation are delineated in Table 1 below where the shaded row is considered to be the working hypothesis for this research effort concerning the construct nouns associated with both Raamses and Pithom.

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[1] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ex 1:11.

Table 1: Possible Construct Noun Meanings for Ex 1:11b

X of Y Statements
Does the store city, the construct noun, possess Raamses (Pithom)? – a relationship of possession.
Is the store city the origin of Raamses (Pithom). – a description of origin
Does Raamses (Pithom) have authority over the store city. – a indication of authority
Is the store city an instrument of Raamses (Pithom). – a description of the instrument used by the second noun.
Is the store city part of the whole of Raamses (Pithom). – The first noun is a subgroup of the second noun. (This is the working hypothesis for the research effort.)
Is Raamses (Pithom) a subset of the store city. – The second noun is a subgroup of the first noun.
Does the store city classify Raamses (Pithom). – a classification capability

Ex 1:11 does contain a suffixed construct noun; specifically, "heavy burdens" which might have some bearing on a total understanding of this scripture. This "construct" noun has a suffixed pronoun for which the X of Y questions can be asked. After a review of the possible questions, it has been determined that these burdens were assigned to the Israelites in accordance within a normal *corvée* environment typical of the ancient near east. This is based on archaeological evidence that demonstrates that the Asiatics, with whom the Israelites are normally associated with in the tomb paintings are not ever shown as "slaves" like Egypt's captured enemies. Basically, this implies that the Israelites were working as "unpaid labor owed by a vassal to his feudal lord, or as forced labor exacted in lieu of taxes."[2] Finally, there are no "appositional nouns" in this scripture.

Within Ex 1:11 there are no definite nouns except those associated with the proper nouns of Pharaoh, Pithom, and Raamses. In Gn 47:11 Rameses, not Raamses, is associated with the "best land" and that this is the land within which Joseph settled his family. Additionally, "this land" seems to be associated with the land of Goshen seen in (Gn 47:6 and others). This interesting definite noun associated with a construct noun might lead to a better understanding of why Ex 1:11 has the translation of Raamses or that there is an important reason why it should not have been translated this way, but should have been translated as Rameses.

Conclusions: Based on this analysis, additional research into the translation of Raamses should be conducted. Hopefully, through continued Hebrew grammar and syntax examination will assist in the research.

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[2] Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).