

Techlets

Some questions and comments from Michael S. Sanders of Irvine, California.

A correspondent in Australia kindly sent me a photocopy of two papers written by Dr A.J.M. Osgood regarding a revised chronology. Whilst one referring to the Exodus/Conquest is essentially correct, the second discussing the time of Abraham is not, and the error can be traced to the premise on which it is based.

Dr Osgood states, "During the Chalcolithic of Palestine — the largest and most prolific settlement period" (referring to En-gedi) and he refers to the Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land. In fact Mazar states in the article presumably referred to (not Vol. VII which is non-existent but Volume 11, and not Avi-Yonah who was the editor not the writer), "No domestic ware was found in the enclosure, nor have any remains of dwelling houses of the Chalcolithic period been discovered up to now". This hardly squares with Osgood's contention that it was a prolific, nay the most prolific settlement period. In fact, he is just in error and he uses this error to prove the time of Abraham to have been at that time.

In fact in my revised chronology which he ignores, but which nevertheless is gaining widespread acceptance, the first dynasty of Egypt is placed exactly where Josephus placed it, i.e. 1300 years before Solomon, i.e. starting 2258 BC. Abraham's time is therefore in the early Bronze age, and I have amassed a tremendous amount of evidence to that effect.

What is clear, however, is that under my revised chronology EVERY archaeological discovery proves beyond a shadow of a doubt the historical accuracy of the biblical account. Unlike Dr Osgood however, I have correlated the revision with the full history of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece and the Hittites etc. and it is only when a chronological revision embraces all these other civilisations can an accurate picture be determined.

The first two volumes of the revision will be published later this year in England and I would be happy to provide any excerpts or additional material

which you might find of interest. You might be interested to learn that from the revision and EGYPTIAN records we have been able to discover the location of an Egyptian temple built in Palestine to receive the tribute of Rehoboam (and hence the Treasures of the Temple including the Ark of the Covenant) and an excavation team will investigate the site when the 'troubles' are calmed.

Dr John Osgood replies ...

I am intrigued by the comments of Michael S. Sanders, particularly by the claims which he makes for his own revised chronology. But as I am unaware of its content I can make no comment about its assertions. Certainly I cannot 'ignore' something of which I have no knowledge. However, the date he gives for the first dynasty would raise more questions in my mind than it would answer in view of the date I hold for the Flood, 2302 BC, and for Babel, approx. 2200 BC. However, I am interested in any earnest attempt to revise the presently accepted chronology of the ancient world, and would certainly be interested in his attempt to this end.

His criticism of my paper 'The Times of Abraham', however, needs some comments. He appears to fail to appreciate his own inherent assumptions about the Chalcolithic period, and about the times of Abraham, when he relies on the absence of artifacts from the enclosure to establish a case for the period I identify with Abraham as not being the most prolific period of En-gedi's civilisation.

Abraham was nomadic, and few archaeologists would expect to find artifacts specific to him. Presumably Mamre, Eschol and Aner the Amorite sheiks with whom he was confederate (Genesis 14:13), were also nomadic. We would then expect an Amorite civilisation in En-gedi also to have similar characteristics at the same time period.

That this civilisation was similar and was extensive is clear when we examine the literature on the matter.

Pessah Bar-Adon in '**The Cave of the Treasure**' points out these characteristics when he writes:-

"There is no doubt that the large sanctuary at En-ge-di was a central cult-place for the people of the **entire region**" (p.202 — emphasis mine).

The culture was extensive in area, artifacts being found in caves up and down the region of the Judean desert. It was apparently a cave-dwelling culture, but was clearly quite sophisticated.

Aharoni states the case in **Israel Exploration Journal, 11**, p.13 when he writes:-"What was remarkable about the finds was the fact that they provided evidence of a greater population density in the area for this period **than for any later one**" (emphasis mine).

Even a cursory examination of the expeditions summaries in **Israel Exploration Journal, 11** identifies an extensive civilisation, albeit one without cities and houses so far as we can gauge, a sophisticated culture and one closely related to the Ghassul-Beersheba culture.

Moreover, Sanders fails to appreciate the Mesopotamian milieu associated with this period with its Uruk-Jemdat Nasr affiliation. I have presented a far wider view of the period than his criticism would suggest, and all these details need to be taken together. The criticism, I feel, fails to achieve its objective and the Ghassul Chalcolithic/Early Bronze I horizon, I believe, remains the major serious contender for the times of Abraham.

Some comments and queries from Damien F. Mackey of The University of Sydney.

I have just finished reading your excellent **Ex Nihilo Technical Journal, vol.2**, 1986, and I decided to send you some material and some contacts which should be of special help to you. I am very taken with your re-arrangement of stratigraphy and your new model for the Stone Age. I had been convinced that Bimson's MBA = Conquest was the correct one, but lately half of the revisionists overseas have been developing a new scheme of EB III = Conquest, and they too, like Bimson, come up with some very telling arguments. All revisionists of course reject the conventional placing of the Conquest in Late Bronze.

I note that your references in your revised history include Velikovsky, Courville, Dr Taylor and Bimson (one book only). I wonder if you are aware of the tremendous amount of research that is going on overseas — and has been for about a decade — on the revision. Scholars from all over the world have been examining, analysing and revising Velikovsky's work in minute detail and have corrected many mistakes and have brought the revision to a greater

perfection. Unfortunately in your excellent work you have not tackled the major criticisms which have been levelled at the revised stratigraphies of Conquest = EBA, or MBA. Some of these difficulties I hope to point out in the course of this letter. I think that your articles would have been much more encouraging had you tackled and overcome these apparent anomalies.

I should like to put before you the following queries, not by way of criticism, but for my own enlightenment:

Jericho

The Bible says that there was no city at Jericho between the Conquest and the reign of Ahab. I think in your scheme that you would run into the strongly fortified MB II city filling what should be an empty period.

Hazor

Hazor was burned to the ground, yet there is no evidence of destruction by burning of this city at the end of EBA.

Megiddo

The Bible says that the Israelites were unable to take this city, yet EBA shows evidence of devastation and a hiatus.

Ai and Bethel

I strongly recommend that you read D. Livingston's 'Location of biblical Bethel and Ai reconsidered', **Westminster Theological Journal, 33** (1970), pp.20-44, if you have not already done so. Livingston uses biblical data to show that the conventional location of Ai (and consequently Bethel) at Et-Tell contradicts biblical evidence. Ai must be re-located. My supervisor, who is not necessarily a fan of Velikovsky (Dr Noel Weeks), has been to Et-Tell and believes that Livingston is right in saying that this is not biblical Ai.

I think too that Shechem might be a problem in your scheme of things. From the Bible it would seem that Shechem was a small settlement at the time of Abraham, but a city at the time of Jacob. It seems to me that according to your scheme Shechem would be the same size in Jacob's time as in Abraham's. Correct me if I am wrong. Also Prof. Stiebing, who has criticised at various times the schemes of **all** revisionists (see **Biblical Archaeological Review**, July/August 1985, pp.58-69), raises the problem of

the absence of LBA remains at Samaria as regards the EBA Conquest Reconstruction.

Dr John Osgood responds ...

Thank you for your comments. I will endeavour to answer the queries you raise.

Jericho:- You point out that by my revision I would be confronted with a strongly fortified city at Jericho during MB II, and of course you are correct. This, however, is not such a problem as it would at first seem.

For while the Bible makes it clear that the old EB III city of Jericho (destroyed by Joshua in my scheme) was not rebuilt until the days of Ahab, 1 Kings 16:34 (beginning of Iron I in my revision), it does make it clear that a fortress city, with a palace, capable of stationing 10,000 troops was built somewhere associated with the site of old Jericho, 'the city of palm trees', by Eglon, king of Moab; who in turn was driven out by Ehud ben Gera, no comment being made about the fate of the city so built (see Judges 3:12-30, and Deuteronomy 34:3 and 2 Chronicles 28:15). This is the end of MB IIA — beginning of MB IIB by my scheme, and is detailed in Times of the Judges', part 2(b) (this volume).

One can assume that some repopulation by Israelites took place in this strong city, and it is certain that there was a place of habitation at Jericho during David's reign (see 2 Samuel 10:5) MB IIC/LB I by this scheme.

The MB II city of Jericho fits these characteristics exactly. Moreover, Eglon assumed power with the help of Amalek. The equation Amalek = Hyksos of Egypt I fully accept, as suggested by Velikovsky and Courville, and I have detailed this in my papers in **Ex Nihilo Technical Journal, vol. 1** (1984) and this volume. It is certain that this MB II city was heavily associated with Hyksos artifacts, as one would expect under such circumstances.

Regarding the destruction of **Hazor**, — there are no findings at the end of EB III Hazor that are inconsistent with the Israelite conquest. It is true that no destruction by burning has been found, but a brief consideration of the likely historical scenario and the excavation details should dispel any insurmountable problem.

First, the EB III strata were deep, the uppermost being stratum XIX, found only on the Tell and not on the Plateau. Consequently the chance of getting a fully representative area of any size was small, so arguing from the silence has difficulties.

Second, the biblical record only tells of burning, not of any other type of malice committed against the superstructure. The Israelites would have camped

over a wide area of the Plateau and not necessarily the Tell to any great extent, so the amount of deposit available for encapsulating in time is totally speculative and most likely small considering the size of the Plateau available for habitation.

Assuming the correctness of my identification of the MB I people (Albright nomenclature) with the conquering Israelites, then it is clear that their habitation through MB II and LBA also included the Plateau. It is highly likely therefore that the density of people on the Tell may have been as scanty as the number of MB I artifacts testify. Furthermore the elements (rain, etc.) may well have taken their toll over a significant period of time.

It is clear, however, that the population of Hazor EB III disappeared from the Tell. I find, therefore, no difficulties whatsoever in accepting the end of EB III Hazor as being consistent with the biblical record of the Israelite conquest.

Megiddo. This city rather than contradicting the EB III conquest, confirms the details of scripture in a remarkable way.

The excavators of Megiddo originally identified stratum XVI as the last of the EB III and this was totally destroyed. However, subsequent study has confirmed that stratum XV, originally dated by the excavators to MB IIA, also belonged to the EB III (**Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land III**, p.837), so that the destruction of stratum XVI dates to a time during the EB III and not at the end. I suggest that Jabin may well be a candidate for that destruction in the course of his taking control of Megiddo. (I believe the Khirbet Kerah ware should be understood against the background of Jabin's hegemony.)

Moreover, Megiddo is distinguished by the absence of a clear stratum dating to the MB I. Stratum XII is MB IIB. The intervening strata (XIII-XIV) show admixture of more than one type of culture. In my papers in **Ex Nihilo Technical Journal, vol. 2** (1986) and this volume I have attempted to show that the pottery culture represented from Megiddo during these periods, which is Amiram's family C, shows features of EB III and MB I-II giving a late culture called by some EB IV which I have insisted is a syncretic culture that represents the compromised Israelite culture with Canaanite admixture described in Judges 1.

I believe Megiddo confirms the biblical details. The Bible indicates that Megiddo became a compromise culture. The excavations at Megiddo confirm elements of a new culture, MB I, and yet the continuation of the EB III traditions in some respects, e.g. the continuation of the use of the EB III sacred precinct (**Encyclopaedia III**, p.841), and signs suggestive of a return to pottery traditions of earlier

periods (Amiram, **Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land**, p. 81; also Oren, **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 210).

Ai and Bethel are a different situation altogether, and I do not believe we can be assured of a solution at this point in time. I have not seen a copy of Livingston's paper as yet, but certain other details are worth mentioning.

W. Ross in **Palestine Exploration Quarterly** (1941), p.22-27 reasoned, I believe correctly, that the Bethel of Jeroboam must be Shechem, since it alone fills the requirements. The Bethel of Jacob, and of Joshua-Luz, was found on the border of Benjamin, so it is this Bethel around which our argument must revolve. The question is whether Beiten is this Bethel and hence Et Tell is Ai, or whether we look for another.

Another location may be needed, but it does not particularly affect the revised chronology I have presented.

Beiten did appear to have some EB occupation, but the findings were not up to the expectation of the Judges 1 narrative. Major occupation with the MB I culture began and continued thereafter. It is Et Tell, however, which I feel should have some comment.

If the MB I people were the Israelites, then Et Tell in isolation would fit the narrative extremely well. It shows termination of occupation at the end of EB III, and no reoccupation until Iron II (perhaps Aiath in Isaiah 10:28; see also the exiles in Ezra 2:28). Its topography fits the story of Joshua, with a northern Wadi a small distance away enabling Joshua to draw the people out of the city, and a close western slope near the city where the ambush could hide, yet quickly enter the city as needed. I am not entirely convinced with the arguments I have seen rejecting it on either excavation details or topography, although I sense that geographical argument may carry more weight. In any case, those who have rejected it on excavation grounds have done so on the basis of an end of LB conquest, which is here rejected.

Whatever may be the truth of the identities of Ai and Bethel, at this point in time it does not materially affect the chronology here espoused.

Shechem: This is no problem to the revised chronology presented here, since the passage concerning Abraham and Shechem, viz. Genesis 12:6, does not indicate that a city of any consequence was then present there. On the other hand, Jacob's contact makes it clear that there was a significant city present later (Genesis 33 and 34), but only one which was able to be overwhelmed by a small party of Jacob's sons who took it by surprise.

I would date any evidence of civilisation at these times to the late Chalcolithic in Abraham's case, and to EB I in Jacob's case, the latter being the most

significant.

The Bible is silent about Shechem until the Israelite conquest, after which it is apparent that it developed a significant population until the destruction of the city in the days of Abimelech. If the scriptural silence is significant, then no evidence of occupation would be present after EB I until MB I and no significant building would occur until the MB IIC.

Shechem was rebuilt by Jeroboam I, and continued thereafter until the Assyrian captivity. Moreover, Shechem was almost certainly the Bethel of Jeroboam, during the divided kingdom. So I would expect heavy activity during the majority of LB and all of Iron I.

This is precisely the findings at Shechem, with the exception that the earliest periods have not had sufficient area excavated to give precise details about the Chalcolithic and EB I. No buildings have yet been brought to light from these periods, but these periods are clearly represented at Shechem.

MB IIC at Shechem was a major destruction, so almost certainly it was the city of Abimelech. The population's allegiance to Hamor and Shechem could easily be explained by a return of descendants of the Shechem captives taken by Jacob's son, now returned after the Exodus nostalgically to Shechem, rather than by a continuation of the population through intervening periods (see Judges 9:28, Genesis 34).

For Jeroboam's city and after, the numerous LB and Iron I strata are a sufficient testimony (see **Biblical Archaeology**, XX,XXVI and XXXII).

Samaria again is better explained by this revised chronology. Cultural periods must show blurring into one another depending on conditions. On my revision the Omri Dynasty would occupy a LB II/Iron I position, with more likely emphasis on Iron I in view of the newness of the building at Samaria, whereas in Judah at the same time, which did not have the turbulent politics of the northern kingdom, we may expect some carry over from the LB II.

Hence, by my revision I would expect a beginning of Samaria to be dated to the beginning of the Iron I period, with the first buildings being dated to both Omri and Ahab. Absence of LBA remains at Samaria therefore do not trouble me.

I believe that the nexus Ahab/Jehoshaphat defines the turnabout to the early Iron I period, and that the frequent casemate walls found throughout this part of the Iron I are to be seen against the building activities of these two kings, especially those found throughout Judah (see 2 Chronicles 17:12 — storage cities), particularly in the Negev. They are not Solomon's cities as so frequently assumed.