A Test of Time
Rediscovering Ancient Israel

Following the introductory publication of the proposed Early Third Intermediate Period chronological revision in JACF 3,¹ David Rohl now goes on to discuss the New Chronology model for the 12th to 20th Dynasties - the period of Egyptian history contemporary with the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in Palestine and Syria. In particular, this second paper in the series (delivered as Part Two of the ISIS Fellowship Lecture on the 2nd of May 1992) deals with the consequent implications for the archaeology of the Southern Levant where the New Chronology provides a series of fresh insights into the often controversial disciplines of biblical history and archaeology.

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As readers of the JACF will be aware, in recent years a concerted programme of research and debate into the chronology of the ancient world has been underway in the United Kingdom, in particular amongst a group of postgraduate researchers at University College London, the Institute of Archaeology London, and the University of Cambridge.² Other scholars, participating in the debate through their memberships of ISIS and the Society for Interdisciplinary Studies (SIS) have done much to supplement the research programme with insights and observations from their own specialist areas.³ The range of material covered and the number of scholarly disciplines represented in this research is considerable and the effects have been wide-ranging to say the least. ISIS inaugurated its Journal in 1987, specifically to provide a forum for the chronology debate, and this has now been followed by a book which gives a general outline of some of the issues raised by the various researchers.⁴

These publications, as well as a series of lectures and seminars, have highlighted chronological problems throughout the cultural zone of the Mediterranean during the Bronze to Iron Age transition c. 1200 to 1100 BC - a period when centuries-long 'dark ages' are supposed to have descended upon the rich Bronze Age cultures of Greece, Anatolia, Crete, Cyprus, Syria, Palestine, and the Western Mediterranean. The new research has reinforced the belief that these 'dark ages' may be nothing more than a scholarly invention brought about by the application of a faulty chronology bequeathed to the rest of Old World archaeology by the Egyptologists. This Egyptologically based chronology originated at the turn of the last century and has been subject to critical re-examination only on rare occasions ever since - and then invariably from outside the discipline which introduced it.⁵

The crux of the new research work has centred upon the established chronology of Egypt, in particular the Third Intermediate Period (TIP), that is the 21st to 25th Dynasties - usually dated between 1069 and 664 BC. An investigation of the current chronological model for this complex era in the history of the pharaohs has revealed a catalogue of anomalies which, in combination, point to the need for a drastic revision of Egyptian chronology, bringing the dates for the New Kingdom (which preceded the TIP) down by an absolute minimum of 141 years but possibly by as much as 350 years.⁶ This startling conclusion has dramatic consequences for our understanding of the historical relationship between Egypt and Israel - the subject of this communication to JACF readers.

Problems with Egyptian Chronology

Doubts about the Third Intermediate Period chronological model currently in use first arose in the 1970s with the publication of Kenneth Kitchen's major reference work on the period⁷ when, for the first time, researchers had access to a clear and concise discussion of the source
material in a single volume.

Those of us who delved deeply into the material provided by Kitchen began to unearth anomalies which pointed to a series of catastrophic errors in the historical interpretation of the data - errors which went back to the early days of Egyptology and which had been further compounded by the later somewhat uncritical standard reference volumes which formed the core curriculum in the subject.

The sort of questions which we were now asking had not apparently received serious consideration during nearly a century of scholarship. The main anomalies were dealt with in my JACF 3 paper and elsewhere, and so a summary of those questions is all that is required here to remind the reader of the type of problems which were encountered. For instance:

(a) What explanation was there for the absence of Apis bull burials at Sakkara for the whole of the 21st and first half of the 22nd Dynasties (a period of 218 years)? The long series of Apis burials was otherwise attested from the mid-18th Dynasty right down to the end of the Ptolemaic period (an ostensible interval of some 1340 years). Only the 11 or so early TIP bull burials appeared to be missing from the vaults of the Serapeum. 8

(b) How was it possible that a mid-22nd Dynasty pharaoh’s tomb at Tanis appeared to have been built before that of the second king of the 21st Dynasty - a ruler who in the current chronological scheme must have died some 141 years before the 22nd Dynasty monarch? 9

(c) How did a temple official who died in the early 22nd Dynasty end up being interred within the Royal Cache which was apparently sealed in the late 21st Dynasty? 10

(d) Why were there so many gaps in our records of the high officials of the period? 11

(e) How could certain Egyptologists claim on the one hand that genealogies of officials which stretched back from the 22nd Dynasty to the 19th Dynasty confirmed the current chronology when the three key lineages, which firmly connect kings in the two dynasties, are at the same time supposed to have been corrupted? In all three genealogies it is argued that several generations have been omitted due to scribal errors. The error in each case is by roughly the same number of generations. 12

I could extend this list of chronological anomalies but instead refer the reader to the papers published elsewhere by this writer and others. 13

The implication of all this was that the dates for the TIP had to be reduced. We achieved this by postulating that the 21st and 22nd Dynasties were in fact historically contemporary, thus resolving many of the anomalies observed in the orthodox TIP chronology. Other resolutions were found for the chronological problems of the late TIP with the net result that the dates for the end of the Egyptian New Kingdom were brought down by several centuries in the new experimental model. This scheme, in its alternative versions (varying by up to a century), is usually referred to as the ‘New Chronology’. The chronological model used for this present discussion in JACF employs the maximum reduction envisaged, i.e. the lowest dates for the end of the Bronze Age, and it is this ultra-low chronology which provides a new and exciting starting point for a radical reinterpretation of biblical archaeology.

The End of the Dark Ages

So far we had been working on a purely internal chronology for Egypt and the exercise had proved to be worthwhile. The model we had developed, already in rough outline form by 1980, seemed to work for Egypt itself and would, as far as we could see, solve the general problem of the Mediterranean ‘Dark Ages’. It lowered Egyptian New Kingdom dates by up to 350 years and, with them, the dates of the great Bronze Age cultures

Pierre Montet standing over the silver coffin of Shoshenk II in the antechamber of the tomb of Akheperre Psusennes at Tanis (1938).
of Greece, Crete and Hittite Anatolia. If our model was on the right lines, these Late Bronze Age civilisations could now be seen to have come to an end sometime between 930 and 840 BC rather than the c. 1200 BC of the orthodox chronology.

The proposed reduction in Egyptian dates all but completely closed the gap which was supposed to have existed between the end of the Mycenaean civilisation and that of the Greek 'renaissance' at about 800 BC. Instead of a long 'Dark Age' separating the two periods, we could now see things in terms of a short recession, perhaps of a generation or so, with skills such as ivory carving and literacy never being entirely 'lost'. The architectural and stratigraphical continuity seen throughout the Mediterranean at 'Dark Age' sites could be explained - there had been no intervening centuries, so there was no longer a mystery posed by the absence of sedimentation and other debris which was expected to have gathered over nearly four centuries of abandonment. The conundrum of the almost complete lack of building remains for the Dark Age period could now be resolved - the long searched-for settlements (and the populations who were purported to have built them) had never existed.

The New Chronology and Archaeology

It now remained to check our New Egyptian Chronology against the histories of other countries which had their own independent dating systems.

Many areas affected by the revision, such as Libya, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and the other Mediterranean islands have no written histories going back to Bronze Age times and we know little more about their early history than a few anecdotal snippets provided by the classical writers. Other regions, such as Nubia, are completely tied to Egyptian history, and their dates have to move up or down to match adjustments made to the mother chronology of Egypt. ⁴

In truth, the only independent areas with written histories which can act as a control on Egyptian chronology are Mesopotamia and Palestine. The situation is actually rather extraordinary. While we have, in the Old Testament, the only surviving connected narrative history from any area of the ancient Near East, firm linkage between biblical history and the archaeology of the area has always been elusive.

Much of the problem springs from the essentially 'mute' character of most Palestinian archaeology. In Egypt the kings adorned buildings and other monuments with their names, regnal dates and military exploits. The pharaoh's name and year of reign can also often be found on hundreds of mundane objects from seals on wine-jars to documents relating to private legal cases. In Mesopotamia we have a similar situation in which whole libraries of royal texts, legal and economic documents and even the bricks of entire buildings are marked or stamped with the name of the reigning monarch.

So, in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian archaeology it can often be very easy to date a particular building or stratum to the reign of a given king. By studying and comparing the types of material left during different reigns and dynasties, sequences have been built up which enable us to date, in a relative sense, practically any Egyptian or Mesopotamian artefact. Thus an Egyptologist conversant with the styles of writing used during the New Kingdom can make a fair guess as to which particular dynasty an inscription belongs - by its general style (epigraphy), and the minutiae of handwriting (calligraphy) and spelling (orthography). Likewise scarab styles can be fitted into a dating 'sequence' (seriation) linked to the dynasties. Such material, if found outside Egypt, can naturally help in dating a given building or stratum relative to Egypt's internal chronology.

Thus the individual strata of the Holy Land's ancient tells (occupational mounds) can usually be linked with Egyptian history, depending on the kind of scarabs, pots and other material they contain. We are in a very different situation, however, when it comes to linking the same archaeological strata with events in the traditional history of ancient Israel and her neighbours (the Philistines, Canaanites and Phoenicians) as handed down to us in the Bible. Various strata have been cheerfully labelled 'Davidic' or 'Solomonic' by biblical archaeologists - and to an outsider it may appear that these are factual tags, as reliable as those from Egypt or Babylon. In fact they are not - they are based on pure assumption. As far as I understand, there are no inscriptions from the Hebrew kings in Palestine.

The Moabite Stone.
any earlier than c. 700 BC, when the workmen of king Hezekiah left graffiti on the walls of the water-tunnel of Siloam in Jerusalem. Even then the inscription does not mention king Hezekiah. The connection is merely deduced from the comparison of this tunnel with the biblical description of the tunnel built by Hezekiah. Apart from a seal mentioning Jeroboam (II?), before Hezekiah’s reign the only substantial written document from Palestine which we can firmly link with Israel’s history is the stela of king Mesha of Moab who is mentioned in the Old Testament. Discovered in Jordan it relates events which can certainly be dated to the reigns of kings Omri and Ahab of Israel, about 860 BC. Unfortunately, the stela was not discovered in a stratified archaeological context but turned up as a stray find, eventually reaching the Louvre Museum through the dealers’ market.

In the absence of inscriptions which can firmly link the archaeological record to the traditional history in the Bible, Palestinian sites can only really be dated, ironically enough, by imported material - after the 8th century by Assyrian finds, but before that by the Egyptian material, especially objects like scarabs, bronzes and ivories bearing royal cartouches.

So the results of Palestinian archaeology, by themselves, cannot act as an independent test of Egyptian chronology except, that is, from the early 7th century onwards when Assyrian, Greek and Cypriot material also comes into play.

On the other hand, the narrative recorded in the Old Testament does, apart as an independent yardstick - independent both of Egyptian history and, sadly enough, of biblical archaeology, with which no methodologically sound connections can be established. Despite the frequent onslights of a rabidly critical scholarship, the historical sections of the Old Testament have held up extremely well.

The historical narrative of the Old Testament is generally thought to begin with the story of Abraham. Before that, with the stories of Adam, Noah, etc., we are clearly dealing with an entirely different kind of narrative, largely the province of specialists in anthropology and mythology. Since the time of the Darwinian revolution the biblical texts have been subjected to the most painstaking dissection with the finest intellectual tweezers, but nothing has shaken the basic historical integrity of the narrative, at least as far back as the the 11th century - the time of kings Saul and David. Firmly dated records from Assyrian kings who invaded Palestine during the 9th century BC have confirmed not only the existence of kings such as Ahab and Jehu, but their dates and the general political situation which the Bible relates. Few ancient historians would doubt the basic authenticity of the Old Testament narrative from at least the time of the prophet Samuel (c. 1050 BC). So with Old Testament history we had, along with the Mesopotamian chronology, an excellent and independent test of the low Egyptian dates which we had devised. This article is intended to provide a broad overview of the results of that test as far as the Old Testament is concerned. Given the limitations of space, it will only be possible to provide a brief outline of each point here. It must be stressed that once more that a communication of this nature, dealing with such an immense subject and date-range, will inevitably suffer from a lack of detail. In spite of this obvious failing, it was felt that the overall scheme, which appears to blend together Egyptian history, Levantine archaeology and the Old Testament narrative so neatly, ought to be made available to JACF readers for early study, criticism and comment.

The Solomonic Age

The primary impetus for excavations in Palestine was, and perhaps still is, the search for confirmation of the Old Testament in the archaeological record of the region.

The great building phase of the Israelite kings began, according to the biblical tradition, in the reign of king Solomon (c. 971-931 BC) when the Temple of Jerusalem, Millo and palaces were constructed and other building works were undertaken at the major southern Levantine cities of Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor [1 Kings 9:15].

Then, following Solomon’s death and the resulting schism in 931 BC (employing Thiele’s chronology), a second phase of monumental construction was inaugurated, this time by the seventh and eighth kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel: Omri (885-874 BC), who founded the new capital at Samaria, and his son Ahab (874-853 BC) who greatly extended and enriched the royal
palace there. A later monarch assumed to have undertaken major building work was Jeroboam II.

One of the great problems with the current stratigraphical scheme for Palestine is the relative impoverishment of the period of Israel’s greatest cultural achievement - the reign of king Solomon. James Pritchard notes that the artefactual remains of Iron Age IIA ‘... suggest a cultural level which was apparently lacking in both artistic sophistication and wealth.’

And Kathleen Kenyon is similarly mystified by this strange phenomenon:

Archaeology has provided us with little direct evidence of the glories of Solomon’s court, and has shown that, away from the capital, the civilisation was not of a very high order, nor are there striking signs of economic prosperity ... The sites which have provided the best archaeological evidence, moreover, do little to illustrate another aspect of Solomon’s innovations known to us from the Bible, his activities as a merchant prince. Almost no recognisably imported objects have been found in levels of this period in Palestine proper.

Wall of the Late Bronze Age palace at Ugarit showing the characteristic ashlar offset bosses. A timber relief course can be seen above the third level of stones (beneath the single block). This feature is exactly as described for the Solomonic palace court outer wall and temple inner court at Jerusalem (1 Kings 7:12). [Photo: D. Rohl]

Given that the archaeological remains of the great building works of Solomon at ‘the capital’ (i.e. Jerusalem) have not so far been knowingly unearthed, Kenyon is admitting to the complete absence of archaeological evidence of prosperity in ‘Solomonic’ Iron Age Palestine. This situation is compounded by the richness of finds from three to four centuries before the so-called ‘Solomonic Period’, that is in the last phases of the Late Bronze Age (LBA).

At Megiddo, LBA Strata VIII, VIIB and VIIBA have provided substantial remains of large buildings utilising ashlar stonework including the great ‘migdol’ temple, two palaces and a direct entry gateway (all in use at the time when the early 19th Dynasty ruled in Egypt). A cache of ivory carvings was also found in the ‘treasury’ (associated with the VIIBA palace - contemporary with the mid- to late-19th Dynasty) which ‘constitutes the largest and richest collection of Canaanite carved ivory yet discovered’ in the southern Levant, whilst a gold and semi-precious jewellery hoard was recovered from Room 3100 of the earlier Stratum VIII palace (contemporary with the late 18th or early 19th Dynasty). There were also quantities of imported Cypriot pottery.

Chronicles and Kings tell us of the considerable assistance which Solomon received from the Phoenician king Hiram of Tyre who sent the king of Israel the craftsmen and expertise needed to bring to fruition Solomon’s great building programme. It is logical to assume then that, in the orthodox scheme, the skills of the Phoenician builders, working with fine ashlar limestone...
masonry, would reveal themselves in the archaeology of Iron Age Lebanon. However, when we turn to the ‘Phoenician ashlars’ of Lebanon so far recorded, we find that they are, in fact, all Persian, Hellenistic, or Byzantine.

On those sites which have been examined over and over again - such as Sidon and Byblos - so far no relevant evidence from the Iron Age has come to light. There is no possibility today - in the light of the archaeological finds - of determining the existence of a clear connection between the ashlar masonry of Judah and Israel and Iron Age Phoenicia.21

So where is the archaeological evidence for the much quoted link between an Iron Age Solomon and an Iron Age Hiram of Tyre? It will not be found in Iron Age Phoenicia where the archaeologists have so far failed to turn up a single ashlar building datable to the period between the Late Bronze Age and the Persian era.

The earliest example of offset bossed ashlars identified with typical Israelite monarchy building work in Palestine is to be found at Ugarit in the final stratum before the city’s destruction at the end of the Bronze Age. In spite of the fact that Israelite culture supposedly reached its peak some 250 years after the end of Ugarit, it could be argued that the latter city has its closest affinities with Israel. This is manifested in a number of ways, not least in Ugarit’s literature and language.22 In architecture it is a similar story - in the very type of masonry associated with Ahab at 9th-century Samaria found in the city of Ugarit destroyed by the Sea Peoples just before or during the reign of Ramesses III. In the New Chronology Ramesses III and Ahab are near contemporaries. An interesting comparison can also be made between the Solomonic Temple at Jerusalem (as described in I Kings 5-7 and II Chronicles 1-4) and Megiddo Temple 2048 (Strata VIII to VII).

In a recent study of the First Temple in Jerusalem, it has been concluded that the origins of its building plan and of its various details are to be sought in the local Canaanite culture in this country.23

The Stratum VIIB temple at Megiddo has often been compared to the design of the Jerusalem temple, as has the temple of Hazor’s LBA Stratum 1b located in Area H of the Lower City. One of the most striking features of all three temples is the twin columns erected before the entrance to the inner rooms. In the new chronological scheme (brought about by the lowering of Egyptian New Kingdom dates) we have tentatively assigned Solomon and the early kings of the post-Schism era to the Late Bronze Age rather than the Early Iron Age. Thus Megiddo’s Stratum VIIB city should be representative of the building work of Solomon rather than the much later Iron Age Stratum VA/IVB city.

This entirely changes the picture. The new ‘Solomonic’ Stratum VIIB at Megiddo has precisely the cosmopolitan elements one would expect from the Old Testament view of Solomon’s reign. He is described there in the ‘heroic’ mould of the Late Bronze Age, and now, in the new scheme, Solomon stands chronologically shoulder to metaphorical shoulder with the heroes of the Mycenaean Age, the mighty Egyptian pharaohs Seti I and Ramesses the Great, and the Hittite war lords Suppiluliumas I and Muwatallis. An heroic Israelite king living in an age of heroic rulers.

Solomon’s ashlar-built residence at Megiddo (VIIB) possesses rich ivory carvings and gold treasure. His great temple at Jerusalem is modelled on the Stratum VIII temple of Megiddo, to which he adds two pillars to the entrance - Megiddo’s own ‘Jachin and Boaz’.

Contemporary with Solomon’s building operations in Israel, the rulers of the Lebanese coastal cities (i.e. the biblical Phoenicians) are constructing their ashlar buildings at Ugarit and Byblos. Thus, the Phoenicians are now actually attested archaeologically in the period when they are historically close allies of Israel, rather than shadows in an impoverished Early Iron Age
Phoenicia. We may even note the burial of a king Ahiram at Byblos usually dated to the 10th century BC but whose tomb incongruously contained vases bearing the cartouches of Ramesses II. The name Hiram is of course closely associated with the Phoenician allies of Solomon and the great building achievements of his reign, whilst the New Chronology would place the beginning of Rameses II’s reign in the latter part of the 10th century.

When we turn to the question of ivory carving as a decorative feature in Israelite art, the Old Testament informs us that the most notable periods are again during the reigns of Solomon and Ahab. To the latter is attributed the building of an ‘ivory house’ at Samaria [I Kings 22:39], whilst Solomon is credited with the making of a spectacular ivory throne (amongst other things) with lions on either side (arm?).  

The design of the Solomonic throne is reminiscent of the representation of both the throne of Ahiram of Byblos, carved on his sarcophagus, and the throne of a Late Bronze Age Levantine ruler, carved on the ivory handle found in the Megiddo ivory cache of Stratum VIIA (possibly manufactured during the period of Stratum VIIIB). Both of these thrones have winged sphinxes acting as arm rests.

In virtually every respect the archaeological phase known as Late Bronze Age IIB reflects admirably the era of Solomon as handed down to us in the Old Testament. However, before we continue our discussion of the history and archaeology of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, we should perhaps digress to consider one or two points which should provide clarification in respect of the archaeology of the Early Iron Age in the New Chronology.

### The Archaeology of Iron Age Megiddo

Following the rich archaeological phases of the Late Bronze Age, we have a period known as Iron Age I. At Megiddo the strata of this phase are designated VIIA (transitional LB II - IA I), VIB, VIA and VB. With the exception of VIIA, they are represented by mudbrick settlements with no large ashlar buildings. Structures of Megiddo’s next Iron Age IIA Stratum VA/IVB, on the other side of this somewhat impoverished period, include Palaces 1723 and 6000 and Building 1482, all built of fine ashlars. The following Stratum IVA contained the great six-chambered Gate 2156 (attributed by Yigael Yadin to Stratum VA/IVB but by the excavators and others to IVA), Building 338, the ‘Stables’ 407 and 1576, and the solid offset/inset city Wall 325.

Yohanan Aharoni advocates Yadin’s reassignment of the six-chambered gate to Stratum VA/IVB and then produces the following somewhat surprising statement:

> ... this is one of the rare examples in archaeology where the exact date of a building can be determined even without the discovery of any inscription. These considerations lead to a fundamental starting point for the stratigraphy of Megiddo at the period under discussion: the assumption that the stratum IVB gate was built by Solomon evidently must be accepted as certain.

This is the sort of problem we face when dealing with ‘biblical archaeology’. What evidence is there for such a categoric pronouncement - even coming from so renowned a scholar as Aharoni (such having been oft repeated by his eminent Israeli colleagues, especially, and most forcefully,
by the great Yadin)? As David Ussishkin has pointed out:

The emphasis of the Solomonic constructions at Megiddo mentioned in 1 Kgs 9:15 was clearly on monumental palace-compounds rather than on strong fortifications.26

There is no Old Testament evidence that Solomon built gateways at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer. When we look for such activities, we do indeed find that Solomon ‘built Upper Beth-Horon and Lower Beth-Horon as fortified towns with walls and gates and bars’ 27 - but no such statement is available for the three cities so often given as examples of Solomon’s great defensive works. Ussishkin has also shown that the so-called ‘Solomonic Gate’ type is neither exclusive to the period of Solomon nor to the three cities which Aharoni and others are so convinced supply us with the proof of Solomon’s place in the archaeology of Palestine:

Summing up the indirect evidence, it seems clear that the six-chambered gate type was popular throughout the country during the 10th-9th centuries B.C., rather than being an exclusive type of gate constructed only in Solomon’s royal cities.28

The trouble with statements such as that of Aharoni, and of others before him, is that, if they are repeated often enough, they become accepted ‘facts’ and subsequent archaeo-historical arguments, however well reasoned, may stem from what is in effect an unsubstantiated and erroneous starting point.

With Stratum VA/IVB at Megiddo thus attributed to the building activities of Solomon, it was then only a short step to assign the fine buildings of the succeeding Stratum IVA to the Omrid dynasty.

Continuing along this logic path, between Megiddo Strata VIIA and VA/IVB must be the levels associated with the period of Judges and the era of David. The three strata VIIB to VB are the least impressive occupation levels for the whole period under discussion - a situation compatible with the history of Israel at that time. So, it is understandable that archaeologists have chosen to assign the next ‘combined’ Stratum VA/IVB to the era of Solomon (and VB approximately to the time of David) - after all, the rich Bronze Age levels at Megiddo are far too remote in time to be considered ‘Solomonic’ in the chronological model currently in use. It can hardly be the fault of the biblical archaeologists if Egyptology has bequeathed to them a chronological framework which might be as much as 350 years in error in terms of the date for the end of the Bronze Age. Solomon, therefore, has to be associated with the relatively prosperous Iron Age Stratum VA/IVB - there is no real alternative in the orthodox chronological scheme. This stratum does contain notable buildings, but these are not associated with any ivories, goldwork or imported pottery - precisely the artefacts we should expect from the Solomonic era. It must also be noted that the so-called ‘Solomonic stables’ are located in Stratum IVA and not VA/IVB, so these can no longer be associated with Solomon’s chariotry as was originally proposed. Thus, the question of identifying Solomonic archaeological remains is not so clear cut as we are given to understand from the popular books on biblical archaeology, nor for that matter in the standard reference works on the university student’s reading list.

Our discussion of Solomonic architecture must be interrupted at this point so that we can turn our attention to the royal city of Samaria. It is with this key archaeological site that we are introduced to the works of Omri and Ahab whose building activities we can be much more confident of locating in the archaeological record. I will then return to the Solomonic question later, in order to elaborate upon the alternative view to that currently accepted.

Samaria Periods I and II

We know from I Kings 16:23-24 that: ‘for two talents of silver he [Omri] bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer and on it built a town which
he named Samaria after Shemer who had owned the hill.

It was reasonable, therefore, to assume that the earliest major structures on the site would be Omrid, as the Bible implies that this king was the founder of the new city of Samaria; and indeed, a fine solid ashlar wall was unearthed which was associated with a 25 cms thick compacted limestone floor laid directly upon the solid rock at the summit of the hill (Kenyon’s Period I). This, the excavators agreed, was the work of Omri during the last six years of his reign, and the later terrace extension of the hill, with its ashlar casemate retaining wall, must therefore have been the work of his son and successor Ahab (Kenyon’s Period II).

However, once again we have a difficulty, for the pottery associated with the two building phases appears to be at odds with these assumptions. In dealing with the Period I pottery, the results of Kathleen Kenyon’s analysis are quite specific:

The pottery of this period is quite distinct from that of later periods. In form it has analogies with sites which are dated to Early Iron I, … 39

The problem here is that Omri’s building phase at Samaria is dated to 880-874 BC - that is during Aharoni/Amiran’s Iron Age IIB. To compound the problem:

No distinctions could be drawn between the ware of Periods I and II. 30

In other words, Period II pottery was also Iron Age I (IA I) in typology. When we look in more detail at Kenyon’s analysis we find that she sees the types as characteristic of Megiddo V, Tell Beit Mirsim Stratum B and of Gibeath Stratum II. More recently, Lawrence Stager has taken things further, noting close parallels with pottery of Megiddo Strata VII to VI, Tanaach Strata IA to IIA and Tell Qasile Strata XI to X, all apparently of a date ‘no later than the 11th century B.C.’. 31 So, according to the ceramic specialists, the type of pottery found in Samaria Periods I and II, dated by Kenyon to Omri and Ahab, is elsewhere located in the pre-Solomonic strata!

Beit Mirsim B and Gibeath II came to an end approximately at the same time as Hazor X and Megiddo VA/IVB - in other words, if Kenyon is right about the Period I and II pottery at Samaria, and if the buildings of these periods remain attributable to Omri and Ahab, then these two kings could not have been the builders of Megiddo IVA, but must be associated with the ‘Solomonic’ city of the earlier VA/IVB phase. In the current chronological scheme, Solomon’s activities would then have to be pushed back into the impoverished period of Megiddo VIA to VB! This is not a very satisfactory situation to say the least.

On the other hand, if Stager is correct (as I would argue) in identifying close parallels between Samaria Periods I and II pottery and that from Megiddo VI/A, we may be able to postulate that Samaria was founded in the very earliest phase of the Iron Age and so the reigns of Omri and Ahab could be contemporary with Stratum VIA at Megiddo. Solomon would then find his place in the rich stratum of Megiddo VI/A as previously argued solely on the chronological evidence.

So what explanation might be offered by the orthodox scholars to ease the obvious difficulties that have come to light between the pottery, archaeology and history of Samaria? Well, what about disassociating the pottery of Periods I and II from the ashlar walls at Samaria? Is it possible that the pottery comes from an occupation of the hill by Shemer’s ancestors as Stager has suggested? 32 A reasonable idea, but does it really stand up to investigation? In my view (and that of Kenyon) the answer must be a firm ‘no’ on the basis of all normal stratigraphic criteria, because
the Iron Age I pottery was found in the filling of the casemate wall of Period II and also amongst fill material in the terrace between the solid wall (161) of Period I and the Period II casemate wall:

The pottery of this period [Period II] came entirely from the filling imported to raise the level between wall 161 and the newly built casemates, and inside the casemates themselves. 33

If the material is not that used by the builders of the walls, then a wholesale levelling of an earlier occupation of the hill must be considered of which some evidence must surely exist in the excavation reports. However, Kenyon is quite clear that there is no significant evidence of such an occupation. She freely admits to the dilemma she finds herself in with the dating of the pottery:

If this dating is correct it would imply that there had been a slight E.I. I occupation of the site prior to Period I, of which there is no other evidence at all... 34

There was some Early Bronze Age pottery at Samaria, but this was found in hollows in the rock beneath the floors of Period I:

In a number of pockets in the rock were deposits of chocolate-coloured soil which contained predominantly Early Bronze Age pottery. None of these were however pure, but contained some Israelite pottery as well, presumably as the result of clearing up before the Israelite building operations. 35

This is entirely different to the situation with the Iron Age I material which has clear associations with the buildings of Periods I and II. To quote Nahman Avigad’s summary of the position:

The pottery of period I was found in the fills of the structures of period I, according to Kathleen Kenyon’s terminology, and she attributes this pottery to the construction period of the buildings, claiming that it was brought by the builders in the time of Omri. ... These conclusions, however, are disputed by W. F. Albright, Y. Aharoni, R. Amiran, and G. E. Wright ... on the grounds of a typological comparison with pottery from other excavations, they date it [i.e. the pottery] earlier, to the tenth and beginning of the ninth century B.C. 36

He then goes on to state Kenyon’s convictions on the dating of the occupation levels at Samaria:

... when discussing the pottery she states that there was no trace of occupation from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age until the time of Omri. This controversy has not yet been resolved from the methodological standpoint, and the stratigraphic problem will be clarified only with further excavation. 37

It is interesting that Avigad believes the problem can only be solved by new excavation. In my view this will only confirm Kenyon’s findings, because the real problem is a Palestinian chronology which for the pre-Ahab era depends entirely on the crumbling edifice of Egyptian chronology.

In Levantine archaeology no-one has dared to suggest the obvious - that the end of IA I must be brought down to c. 800 BC, as Kenyon has it (precisely because of her conclusions at Samaria). Aharoni and Amiran 38 assign 200 years to IA I (which is at least heading in the right direction, if even then still too long by at least a century for the New Chronology model). Simply stated, the reason why the idea of a short IA I, ending in 800 BC, is unthinkable is because the end of the Late Bronze Age is tied to Egyptian chronology and the Sea Peoples invasion (in Year 8 of Ramesses III, currently dated to 1176 BC 39) - thus the Iron Age must have begun in the 12th century and IA I would have lasted 400 years!

However, in the New Chronology, Year 8 of Ramesses III may be dated to around 847 BC and, therefore, IA I would have begun in the 9th century - the same century as the building activities of Omri and Ahab. The cultural apogee of the Solomonic period would then manifest itself near the end of the Late Bronze Age - the equivalent of Megiddo Stratum VIIB - the precise time when Palestinian archaeology has provided a wealth of material compatible with the image of Solomon portrayed in the Old Testament. This would then suggest that Omri was perhaps associated with Megiddo’s first Iron Age Stratum VIIA - in line with the highest limit of Stager’s proposed pottery dating for Samaria Periods I and II. Megiddo Strata VI - VB would then represent the reigns of Ahab to Jehoash (874-792 BC) with Jeroboam II (792-753 BC) represented by the relatively rich Megiddo Stratum VA/IVB.

The Problem of Solomon’s Stables

If we now turn to the ‘Solomonic stables’ problem, we find the New Chronology opens up new solutions. It has long been appreciated that the so-called ‘Solomonic stables’ of Megiddo Stratum IVA cannot belong to the time of Solomon, but to some later king of Israel. The popular choice
again is Ahab. I have attempted to demonstrate that Ahab should be associated either with Stratum VA/IVB (on the grounds of Kenyon’s pottery analysis of Samaria) or Stratum VIIA (using Stager’s higher dating for the same pottery). Thus the stables would be even further removed from Solomon’s time.

Recently, however, some astute research on the part of G.I. Davies has perhaps retrieved the situation. He has shown that there were in fact very similar buildings to the Stratum IVA stables immediately beneath the stable compound in the locality of the Bronze Age temple. Davies quotes from a despatch to the Oriental Institute sent by Loud (the excavator of Megiddo) dated to 1939:

... an earlier building, probably very similar to the stable [of Stratum IVA] and orientated similarly, was largely destroyed for building material for the final stable. And that, in turn, partly utilised a massive third structure, obliquely orientated...

Davies has achieved some excellent ‘re-excavation’ results simply by careful study of the original excavation report and the unpublished archives of the Megiddo expedition:

The excavators distinguish between the stables of Stratum IVB, walls which certainly belong to Stratum VI, which was destroyed or demolished c. 1200 B.C., and walls about whose date they were uncertain - they may be from Stratum V or VI or VII. We may ignore the walls of Stratum VIIB, which are much too early to be Solomonic. ...\(^{41}\)

Given the obvious statement that I do not agree that we should ignore the walls of Stratum VIIB, it does appear that ‘stables’ did exist at Megiddo in an earlier period - the question is which period? Davies makes the following observation:

... in this part of the mound remains of different strata are very mixed up; walls of Stratum VIIB sometimes lie very close to the floor surface of Stratum IV.\(^{42}\)

In other words, a) there is no stratigraphic depth between Stratum VIIB and Stratum IVA in this area, and b) it is extremely difficult therefore to date these newly discovered stables to any specific stratum which the excavators have discerned in other areas of the site. It is entirely possible that they are Late Bronze Age (i.e. late Stratum VII, or, indeed, with the New Chronology in mind, I would even suggest that the ‘massive structure’ of ‘Stratum VIIB’ may be what we should really be looking at in respect of any Solomonic stables.

Alternatively, is this ‘massive structure’ not part of the Stratum VIII temple complex and therefore earlier than the period of VIIB? This would enable us to assign Davies’ newly discovered ‘stables’ to VIIB - precisely the time of the Solomonic era in the New Chronology. There is certainly confusion over the walls which Davies now attributes to the Solomonic stables (his ‘middle building’) because the excavators actually place them with the buildings of Stratum VIII or VIIB in their excavation notes and correspondence. For example, in discussing the same Loud letter, Davies notes the following:

But strangely, in the letter, Loud was proposing a much earlier date for the ‘middle building’: ‘Whether that middle period will remain VIII, as tentatively assigned, or can better be assigned to VIIB on parallels from the palace, has yet to be determined.’\(^{43}\)

Perhaps it would be wise to leave a decision as to the level of these new stables until the results of new excavations beneath the Stratum IVA stables in other parts of the site have been fully published:

... it should be remembered that as much as half the summit of the mound has not yet been excavated down to the 10th century levels.\(^{44}\)
As it stands at this moment, there is nothing that I can see which prevents an assignment of these earlier stables to the Late Bronze Age, and the duration of the Early Iron Age I and II at Megiddo remains indeterminable on purely archaeological grounds.

With the Iron II structural series, however, absolute chronology is hampered by the absence of clear destruction levels: there is no evidence that all the 'VA' or 'VB' domestic structures were destroyed by conflagration, nor that their periods of occupation came to an end at a single time. There is no clear evidence for a Shishak destruction level at Megiddo. The traces of burning within a few of the domestic buildings of 'stratum V' have yet to be shown to be synchronous, to have been caused by military intervention, and to have been caused specifically by Shishak’s army. Any attempt to satisfy all three requirements is bound to move beyond the data into the realm of speculation. 45

So far, I have tried to demonstrate that the archaeology of Palestine, when synchronised with the New Chronology, provides biblical scholarship with a superior 'biblical archaeology' framework to that currently employed. But what about the historical picture in relationship to Egypt?

Ramesses II, Shishak and Solomon

Here too we have some intriguing observations to make. You will have gathered by now that if we shift Solomon into the Late Bronze Age (by lowering the dates of the latter), the removal of the treasures from Solomon’s temple at Jerusalem in Year 5 of Rehoboam by Pharaoh Shishak could not have been the work of the 22nd Dynasty founder, Shoshenk I. This may seem an outlandish proposition, given the closeness of the two names. Indeed, Kitchen, in a recent criticism of the new chronological model, regards the equation as ‘beyond rational dispute’; 46 but John Bimson has clearly demonstrated that the Shoshenk I campaign (as recorded on the Bubastite Portal at Karnak) bears no resemblance whatsoever to the campaign of Shishak as described in I Kings 14:25-6 and II Chronicles 12:2-9. 47 Bimson notes that:

(a) The thrust of Shoshenk’s campaign was against the cities of the Jezreel and Jordan, with a secondary strike into the Negev. Thus, in the orthodox chronological model, Shoshenk was attacking the Northern Kingdom of Israel under king Jeroboam - Shishak’s ally according to I Kings 11:40. The Bible, on the other hand, states quite categorically that Shishak’s attack was upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah then under the rule of Solomon’s son Rehoboam.

(b) Jerusalem, whose temple and palace were stripped of their treasures (which were then brought back to Egypt as booty) does not appear in Shoshenk’s list of defeated cities. At the point where it should have appeared the inscription is well preserved.

(c) Shoshenk’s campaign route conspicuously avoided the territory of Judah, skirting its northern boundary before heading down into the Jordan Valley. It is quite clear that Rehoboam’s kingdom was not penetrated by Shoshenk I - this in spite of the fact that, according to II Chronicles 12, the Egyptians ‘with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand cavalry and countless hordes of Libyans, Sukkiiim and Cushites who came from Egypt with them … captured the fortified towns of Judah and reached Jerusalem’.

Such major contradictions cast serious doubt on the present identification of Shoshenk I with Pharaoh Shishak of the Bible and Kitchen perhaps

The famous statue of Ramesses II on exhibition in the Museo Egizio in Turin. [Photo: D. Rohl]
ought to reconsider who is being rational and who is not. Surely any rational scholar would have to admit that the Shishak/Shoshenk equation may not be beyond dispute given the above problems.

So, who in the new chronological scheme would be a good candidate for Shishak? Well, I have already suggested that Solomon is to be placed in the archaeological period LB IIB - that is in Egyptian terms the era from Haremheb to the end of the 19th Dynasty. At this point in the research programme, however, there appears to be two clear alternatives to the dating of Solomon in relation to Egyptian history - what we might for simplicity's sake call the 'High' and 'Low' models of the New Chronology. They are:

(i) Low: Having the reign of Solomon almost entirely contemporary with Haremheb and Seti I, with Rehoboam beginning his reign in the 3rd year of Ramesses II. This model is based on identifying the campaign of Pharaoh Shishak with the Year 8 campaign into Kharu by Ramesses II (see below).

(ii) High: Placing Solomon's reign almost entirely within the reign of Ramesses II (with its beginning just before the accession of Ramesses) and dating the Shishak invasion and despoiling of the Temple in Year 5 of Rehoboam to around the 42nd year of Ramesses. This model has the advantage of requiring a far less radical revision of the 20th Dynasty and/or the chronology of the TIP, but it is handicapped by the lack of any evidence for such a military campaign by Ramesses in his later years. However, given the fact that the Egyptians tended to undertake and then record their military activities during the early years of a new reign, when the commissioning and decorating of public works was almost obligatory, it may not be surprising to find a complete absence of records relating to minor campaigns undertaken on behalf of Ramesses II sometime later in his long reign.

In essence, the difference between the High and Low models is about 35 years for all the dates following the reign of Ramesses II. However, this is not necessarily the case for those dates preceding the 19th Dynasty. This is because of the chronological latitude available for the late 18th Dynasty sequence of reigns. For example, Seti I's highest known regnal date is Year 11, but a scene from his mortuary temple at Qurna and the famous text located in the portico at Abidos combine to suggest that he took Ramesses II as his co-regent in his own 8th year. The question here is whether Ramesses began counting his regnal years from this co-regency or whether he commenced his first official year upon the death of his father (in the orthodox chronology the latter option is accepted).

Another example of how the period can be adjusted is the interpretation of the 'Mes Inscription' which records a 59th Year of king Haremheb in relation to a legal dispute. All scholars who accept this date as genuine agree that we are dealing here with a Ramesside method of dating events during the heresy period of the el-Amarna kings - a period which was otherwise struck from the official records. In other words, the reign of Haremheb was allowed to subsume the regnal years of his predecessors (i.e. documents were later dated to his reign for the period from the year when the heresy was perceived to have begun to the death of Haremheb). This was because Haremheb was considered to have been the only legitimate pharaoh of the era by his successors. The question for chronologists, then, is at what point did the Ramessides consider the retrospective reign of Haremheb to have commenced? Was it with the accession of 'the criminal' Akhenaten or at the death of Amenhotep III (or perhaps even earlier)? As a co-regency between Amenhotep III and Akhenaten is considered to have been likely, then the absolute date for the death of Amenhotep might vary by as much as 12 years (the duration of the maximalist co-regency theory).

With all the variables taken into consideration, it is quite possible to accommodate the 35-year differential between the High and Low New Chronology models and yet still retain the date of 1010 BC for the death of Amenhotep III - an absolute date which was principally derived from the astronomical retrocalculations of Wayne Mitchell in JACF 3.

For the purpose of this discussion, I am going to concentrate on the Low chronology model which will give us a series of interesting synchronisms to consider. However, the reader should consider the possibility that the ongoing research programme may at some stage lead to a favouring of the High model.

Shisha - Despoiler of Solomon's Temple

If we assume that the building phase of Stratum VIIIB at Megiddo marks the beginning of LB IIB (as is usually proposed), then Solomon, as its builder, would be, at least in part, a contemporary of Haremheb and Seti I. Rehoboam's reign would then commence soon after the accession of Ramesses II.

Now it is interesting to note that Ramesses had a nickname or hypocoristicon which was employed in the naming of towns and fortresses in Egypt and the Levant. This name is transcribed by Egyptologists as *sysw* - the final 'w' denoting the possible occurrence of a vowel at the
end of the name rather than the consonantal ‘w’ itself (this is referred to as a ‘vowel marker’). We know from the Hittite copy of the treaty between Hattusilis III and Ramesses that the cuneiform script represented ‘Ramesses’ as ‘Riamashsha’. (We also should seriously consider the legendary tales of Sesososis/Sesostris as simply reflecting the reign of Ramesses the Great rather than an amalgam of the reigns of Senusretes I and II, Thutmose III and Ramesses II.) Given the closeness of ‘s’ and ‘sh’ in the scripts of the ancient Near East, we could quite justifiably read ‘Shisha’ (‘Shesha’/ ‘Shishu’/ ‘Sheshu’ or the like) as the hypocoristic name of Ramesses II.

Did Ramesses II ever record a victory over Jerusalem? On the pylon gateway of his mortuary temple in Western Thebes there is an inscription which deals with a campaign into Khuru (Palestine and Syria). There the scribes of the king record: ‘The town which his Majesty captured in Year 8 - Shalem’ - one of the names of Jerusalem handed down to us in the Old Testament 31 and the only Shalem attested from the pre-Christian era. 32 Kitchen himself confirms that Ramesses did indeed bring an army to Jerusalem as part of his effort to put down a revolt in the southern Levant:

... next spring for Years 7/8 ... Ramesses took things in hand. In no time he reached Gaza ... A flying-column swept the Shous back east, out of Canaan entirely. Then Ramesses dealt with East Palestine. Led by the senior prince Amen-hir-khopesh ... the flying-column struck down through the Negev hills, across the rift valley south of the Dead Sea, and up into Edom-Seir, conquering their settlements. Then the Prince’s forces swung north across the deep ravine of the Zered into the heartland of Moab and along the traditional ‘King’s Highway’ to conquer Butartu (Raba Batora). At the same time, Ramesses himself swept round in a clockwise arc to complete the pincer movement - across the hilly central ridge of Canaan past Jerusalem, over the Jordan, past Jericho and the north end of the Dead Sea, and south into Moab, striking at Dibon. That settlement taken, he then came on south across the Arnon valley and stream, to link up with Prince Amen-hir-khopesh [my emphasis]. 33

It should also be noted that the size and make-up of the Egyptian force ranged against Rehoboam, as described in II Chronicles 12, is consistent with our understanding of the military resources available to Ramesses the Great, whereas we have no evidence to suggest that Shoshenq I was capable of conscription on that sort of scale. It would not be at all surprising to find Kushites and Libyans in the services of Ramesses II whose reliefs show a variety of foreign mercenaries making up the army of Pharaoh. On the other hand, we have no evidence that Kushites (that is Ethiopians) served in the Egyptian army during the Libyan period.

An Egyptian Palace at Jerusalem

Let us, for this exercise, equate the Year 8 capture of Shalem by pharaoh ‘Shisha’ (Ramesses II) with the sacking of the Temple of Jerusalem in Year 5 of Rehoboam and date the event to 925 BC (using Thiele’s biblical chronology). The first year
University in Jerusalem has announced the discovery of an ‘Egyptian’ monumental building in Jerusalem containing lotus-style column capitals, an offering table of the *hotep* type, a stela bearing hieroglyphs, a statuette of a seated figure in Egyptian dress, and quantities of 19th Dynasty pottery. The remains of this building are located to the north of the Temple Mount on a hill looking down upon the City of David (i.e. ‘up from the City of David’). It is my contention that Barkay has actually discovered building material and artefacts from the royal residence of Pharaoh’s daughter and, within the chronological model employed here, that the pharaoh concerned was, in all likelihood, Haremheb. The examination of a female skeleton found in the burial chamber of the Memphite tomb of Haremheb has revealed that the woman had given birth to a least one child. Geoffrey Martin, the excavator, believes that the woman is to be identified with Mutnodjmet, Haremheb’s queen. Given that the royal couple had no male heir to the Egyptian throne when Haremheb died, it is quite possible that Mutnodjmet only bore the king princesses. In the model on offer here, Haremheb would then have sealed a marriage alliance with Solomon in order to stabilise the political situation in the north whilst the pharaoh was preoccupied with his own re-establishment of order in Egypt itself following the Amarna fiasco.

**Millo Rediscovered in the City of David**

During her excavations on the east slope of the City of David from 1961 to 1967, Kathleen Kenyon uncovered areas of stone-faced terracing...
constructed to accommodate the expanding city of Jerusalem. Kenyon consistently maintained that this terracing, covering an area some 2,150 feet square, was the mysterious Millo or 'filling' (mentioned in II Samuel 5:9; I Kings 9:15 & 24, 11:27; I Chronicles 11:8; and II Chronicles 32:5) which David and Solomon 'built' following the capture of Jebusite Jerusalem by David. The problem was that the archaeological evidence (i.e., associated pottery) indicated that these terraces were constructed in the period contemporary with the late 18th or early 19th Dynasties in Egypt. Kenyon was therefore forced to conclude that the Millo was not 'built' by David and Solomon but only repaired and extended, the original Millo having been erected by the Jebusites some 350 years earlier. In the new scheme offered here the archaeological evidence is entirely compatible with the Old Testament's identification of the builders of the Millo - David's reign began when Akhenaten ruled over an inward looking Egypt, whilst Solomon was a contemporary of Haremheb and Seti I, at the time when Egypt's 18th Dynasty was drawing to a close and the militaristic Delta Ramessides were making their bid for power.

Letters from King Saul

Now we must turn to perhaps the most amazing of the discoveries revealed by the application of the New Chronology upon 'biblical history'. If we continue to work backwards from the reign of Solomon in the time of Haremheb and Seti I, we find that the rise of the United Monarchy under kings Saul and David was contemporary with the el-Amarna period in Egypt. JACF readers will be aware of the famous collection of correspondence known as the el-Amarna Letters which, in part, covers the chaotic political situation pertaining in the southern Levant at the time of the late 18th Dynasty. Here then we had a superb opportunity to test out our New Chronology. Could we find information in the Letters which confirmed the activities of Saul and David as related in the books of Samuel? Indeed, did king Saul actually write to the pharaoh?

Our detailed analysis of the complex machinations of Amarna Palestine has been published elsewhere and a further article on this fascinating subject will be submitted to JACF for future publication. Restrictions of space, in what is already a long article, will only permit a brief list of the key observations and identifications with a selection of references.

(a) In the Amarna Letters, the key group of trouble-makers in the hill-country of Palestine are the habiru. They threaten the major cities of the region, but in particular the enclave of Abdi-Heba, ruler of Jerusalem. We would equate these habiru with the Hebrew mercenaries under David during his exile from Saul's court, but also including the seven years following Saul's death when David overthrew the Philistines and captured Jerusalem. The close similarity between the habiru of the Letters and the Hebrews under David has been noted by renowned scholars such as George Mendenhall 60 and Moshe Greenberg 61 who failed to make the true connection simply because the current chronological placement of the Amarna habiru falls well before the orthodox date for David (and even of the Exodus!).

(b) We would identify the king of the hill-country in the Letters, one Labayu (= 'Lion (of deity NN)'), with king Saul. His letters to Amenhotep III are, according to William Albright, written in a mix of archaic hebrew and akkadian (the latter being the lingua franca of the era). Because of the absence of the usual diplomatic jargon, they indicate humble beginnings with a royal court perhaps still in its infancy. Aharoni describes the
area ruled by Labayu as ‘an extensive kingdom’\textsuperscript{63} which, several of the letters imply, he is continually endeavouring to expand. In Psalm 57 David describes the bodyguard of Saul as labaim (= ‘lions’). Benjamin Mazar sees these labaim as ‘mercenaries ... probably a military corps whose emblem was the lioness-goddess’.\textsuperscript{64} In our scenario they would be mercenaries in the service of Labayu. The names of Saul (= ‘asked for’) and Solomon (= ‘peace’) reflect the historical character of their respective reigns and may have been attributed to the early kings of Israel by the later biblical writers. We cannot be certain that either name was used at the time of the events recorded in I Samuel, I Kings and I Chronicles. So, was the first king of Israel referred to by his contemporaries as ‘Lion’ (the hypocoristicon for ‘Lion of Yahweh’)?

(e) In a letter from Mutaal [EA 256], written to the Egyptian governor at Gaza, he refers to three individuals whom he suggests that the governor should consult regarding the whereabouts of one Ayyab. They are Benelima (= ‘son of the gods’), Yishuva (= ‘Yah exists’) and Dadua/Dudua (= ‘beloved of deity NN’). We would equate the last two individuals with David (Dudh = ‘beloved of Yahweh’) and his father Jesse (Yishay = ‘Yah(weh) exists’). It is also within the bounds of possibility that the names Ayyab and Benelima represent two other Israelites mentioned in II Samuel, Joab (‘Yah is the father’) and Meribaal (perhaps ‘Mar-baal’ = ‘son of the Lord/Baal’).

(f) One of the principal enemies of the city-state rulers in the Amarna Letters is the king of Amurr, one Aziru. It has been argued that the name Aziru is the hypocoristicon of Hadad-ezer.\textsuperscript{65} Hadad-ezer was the troublesome king of Aram-Zobah during the time of David. He was the most powerful ruler in Syria at the time.

(g) Other comparisons can be made between (i) Téhu-Teshub (author of EA 58 and a king of northern Syria) and Toï/Téhúia (of deity NN), king of Hamath on the Orontes, mentioned in II Samuel 8:9-10; Shuwarda (‘gift of the sun’) of Gath (EA 278-284) and Ačésh (hypocoristicon of Akk-Shamash ‘gift of the sun’ or Akk-sharru = ‘gift of the king’); and (iii) the name Gulaṭu of EA 292 & 294 with the name Goliath (although the former bears a female determinative - so we may be dealing here with some sort of family connection).\textsuperscript{66}

These few points should give the reader an impression of the exciting possibilities which stem from the New Chronology’s placement of the Early Monarchy period at the time of the pharaohs Amenhotep III and Akhenaten in Egypt. One or two further general observations might also be made at this juncture.

The Bible tells us of a catastrophic plague which struck Palestine during David’s reign [II Samuel 24:15]. At the time of the Amarna correspondence, a virulent plague wreaked havoc in the Levant. The Hittite army brought the deadly disease back to Anatolia leading to the deaths of the emperor Suppiluliumas and his successor Arnuandas. In Egypt it may have accounted for a number of members of Akhenaten’s royal family (following the Year 12 ‘durban’) and perhaps brought about the collapse of the Atenist religious experiment. We would suggest that the two plagues are in fact one and the same, given their contemporaneity in the New Chronology.

It is often noted that the literature from LBA Ugarit finds close parallels in the Psalms. In
In particular, it is suggested that Psalm 29 was directly adapted from an existing prayer to Baal found in the LBA archive at Ugarit, upon which the psalmist must have based his version dedicated to Yahweh. In the New Chronology the two versions are roughly contemporary rather than being separated in time by around 200 years as in the orthodox scheme. Similarly, the close parallels between the ‘Hymn to the Sun’ by Akhenaten and Psalm 104 ‘composed’ by David have often been remarked upon. In the New Chronology the two poems are of the same literary generation.

The Era of Hammurabi

For the final set of revelations which stem from the new chronological model we need to employ a little astronomical dating. The date for the accession of Hammurabi has been a source of fairly constant debate over the years. Currently three main dates are proffered, all based on astronomical retrocalculations for the Venus observations and month-length data recorded in the reign of Ammisaduqa, the fourth successor of Hammurabi in the Old Babylonian Dynasty. The choice of ‘Venus Solutions’ (VS) for Year 1 of Ammisaduqa are 1702 BC (‘High’), 1646 BC (‘Middle’) and 1582 BC (‘Low’). The renowned statistician, Peter Huber, strongly favours the ‘High’ solution based on his recommended formula which provides a ‘probability value’ for the likelihood of an astronomically derived VS matching the data provided in the Ammisaduqa observations. The probability value (PV) for the 1702 date is 0.647, considerably higher than either the 1646 date (PV = 0.007) or the 1582 date (PV = 0.189). However, the consensus of the archaeologists is that the ‘Low’ date of 1582 BC is to be much preferred! All these observations were of course sought within the framework of the orthodox chronology. Now, with the New Chronology in mind, Wayne Mitchell has re-run Huber’s retrocalculation computer programs, widening the field of search to include the lower dates of the new chronological model. As a result, he has found a Venus Solution which is some 40 times more likely to be correct than Huber’s own best date of 1702 BC and 138 times more probable than the ‘Low’ date favoured by the archaeologists! Needless to say, the new date for Year 1 of Ammisaduqa of 1419 BC (PV = 26.130) is entirely consistent with the New Chronology’s dates for the Old Babylonian Dynasty.

With this new accession date for Ammisaduqa it is a simple step to establish Year 1 of Hammurabi at 1565 BC using Babylonian King List B. Now it has long been proposed that Hammurabi was a near contemporary of Neferhotep I, the 21st pharaoh of the 13th Dynasty (through artefactual

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Probability table for the favoured Venus Solutions using Huber’s recommended formula. The data takes into consideration the total number of 25 month-lengths given in the texts of the 1st Dynasty of Babylon. [Data supplied by W. A. Mitchell]

Allowing for an increase in c value equal to 0.75 hours by the mid-2nd millennium, the following probability value is calculated for -1418 = 1419 BC.

-1418 | 6 | 2.160 | 1 | 26.130

links via Yantin-Amnu of Byblos and Zimrilim of Mari. The reign of Khasekhemre Neferhotep is recognised as heralding a resurgence of pharaonic authority and power in what had been a somewhat weak period in Egyptian history following the end of the 12th Dynasty. This new era of prosperity appears to have come to an end (around 50 years?) after the reign of Neferhotep’s younger brother, Khaneferre Sebekhotep IV, the 23rd pharaoh of the 13th Dynasty. From the end of the 12th Dynasty, up to and including the period of Neferhotep and Sebekhotep IV, the Western Asiatic slave population in Egypt seems to have been quite considerable as Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 attests. The document records the human assets of an Upper Egyptian estate of which over 50% of the slave population are identifiable as Asiatics. In the New Chronology the era of Neferhotep to Sebekhotep falls in the second half of the 16th century BC.

Sebekhotep IV and Moses

I Kings 6:1-2 tells us that the Exodus from Egypt under Moses took place 480 years before the founding of the Temple of Jerusalem in Solomon’s 4th year (967 BC). Thus we should place the Exodus, according to the traditional source, in the mid-15th century BC. Moses would then have been brought up within the Egyptian court during the second part of the 16th century - in other words during the era of Neferhotep and Sebekhotep IV in the New Chronology.

It just so happens that there is an ancient writer who names the pharaoh in whose court
The 12th to 19th Dynasties in the New Chronology and their relationship to the chronology of events given in the Bible.

Moses was raised. That writer is Artapanus, a Jewish scholar working in the great library at Alexandria sometime in the 2nd or 3rd centuries BC. The name which Artapanus attributes to the pharaoh of Moses’ childhood is somewhat obscure to say the least. He informs us that Moses was raised as a prince of Egypt and then exiled to Midian during the reign of a Pharaoh ‘Khenophres’. There is only one king in Egyptian history who bore this name - Khaneferre Sebekhotep IV.

Sometime after the reign of Khaneferre (which lasted at least 11 years) we come to another key player in our story, Pharaoh Dudimose - as many scholars have argued, the Tutimaeus of Manetho. In his Against Apion Josephus quotes a passage from Manetho in which the Egyptian priest describes an incursion into Egypt by what he calls ‘Hyksos’ invaders from the East:

Tutimaeus. In his reign, for what cause I know not, a blast of God smote us; and unexpectedly, from the regions of the East, invaders of obscure race marched in confidence of victory against our land. By main force they easily seized it without striking a blow; ... 

The ‘and’ separating the ‘blast of God’ from the attack upon Egypt suggests that the invasion of foreigners was as a result of a disaster which struck Egypt. The arrival of these easterners in the Nile Delta may then be seen as a reaction to this catastrophe rather than its cause. After all, Egypt was apparently powerless to defend itself against the onslaught. I would contend, as others have done in the past, that this story is in some way related to the Israelite Exodus, which was brought on by a massive natural catastrophe possibly connected to the destruction of the first Minoan palaces on Crete at the end of Middle Minoan II. It should be noted that this is not the catastrophe associated with the eruption of Thera which is firmly dated on archaeological grounds (now also in Egypt) as well as Crete and the Aegean) to sometime during the LM IA of Crete or the LB I of the early 18th Dynasty. Thus we are not advocating full acceptance of the new Exodus theory of Hans Goedicke although clearly the two scenarios, with their links to natural disasters, are similar. However, they occur at quite different periods in the archaeological record, separated by over two centuries in the New Chronology.

If we now move forward in time to some 40 years after the Exodus in 1447 BC we should discover archaeological evidence for the Conquest of Canaan - which is precisely what we find. John Bimson has already brilliantly elucidated the destruction of Canaanite cities by Joshua's forces near the end of the Middle Bronze Age and I would strongly support all his conclusions - with one exception.

The major criticisms of Bimson’s theory have focussed on his suggestion that MB IIIC must have come to a close around the time of Thutmose III or Amenhotep II. Whilst working within the conventional chronology, but at the same time accepting a 1407 BC Conquest date, Bimson obviously requires a destruction of Jericho in the mid-18th Dynasty. Even though Manfred Bietak now appears to support this late date for the end of MB IIIC, scholars such as Aaron Kempinski have forcefully argued for a much earlier destruction date for Jericho, at least 50 to 100 years before the end of the Hyksos period. Others have
pointed out that, because bichrome and proto-white slip ware have been found in some quantities in the last Hyksos phase at Tell el-Daba (Stratum D/2) and in the City II/Palace II stratum at Tel el-Ajjul (now strongly favoured as the Hyksos city of Sharuhen), the Late Bronze Age, marked by the appearance of this pottery, must have started before the fall of Avaris and Sharuhen - that is well before the start of the 18th Dynasty. No bichrome or imported Cypriot wares have been found at Jericho, Tell Beit Mirsim (Debir?) or Shechem, suggesting that these cities were destroyed prior to the appearance of the new pottery in Palestine.\textsuperscript{81} The important factor, then, is not so much the date for the end of MB IIIC, but rather the absence of bichrome and Cypriot ware in the destroyed cities associated with the Conquest.

MB Jericho seems to have come to a sudden end soon after or during the reign of an early 'Hyksos' ruler called Sheshi. This conclusion has been reached by a number of scholars who use the discovery of a scarab of this king in one of the latest MB tombs at Jericho as an indicator for the date of Jericho's demise.

Scarab 3281 of king Sheshi found in Tomb H13 at Jericho. [After O. Tufnell: Scarab Seals (1984), Plate LVIII]

The scarabs of Sheshi are of a style which precludes his placement near the end of the Hyksos period.\textsuperscript{82} What is more, scarabs of this king are also associated with the earliest phase of City II at Tell el-Ajjul (that is at the beginning of the Hyksos-built city).\textsuperscript{83} Ward places king Sheshi at position three in the Hyksos 15th Dynasty on the basis of his seriation of scarab designs and dimensions. But then he also notes that the scarabs of a king Nehesy are very similar to those of the mid-15th Dynasty (presumably including Sheshi himself).\textsuperscript{84} Nehesy clearly predates the Hyksos 15th Dynasty both in the Turin Canon and, apparently, archaeologically,\textsuperscript{85} so I would suggest that, based on the similarity of his scarabs to those of Nehesy, Sheshi cannot be a king of the 15th Dynasty (for which there is no clear cut evidence) but must be an important ruler of what might be called the 'Early Hyksos' phase of the Second Intermediate Period, that is some generations before the establishment of the 'Greater Hyksos' 15th Dynasty under 'Salitis'. Manetho tells us that it was only after an unspecified period of years when 'Finally, they appointed as king one of their number whose name was Salitis.'\textsuperscript{86} The 'finally' indicates that we may be dealing here with some considerable interval of time between the initial invasion of nomads (heralding from southern Palestine/Arabia) and the founding of a new 'Hyksos' stronghold at Avaris by Salitis (a chieftain possibly of Northern Levantine Byblicite/Ugaritic origins). This idea is not new: Petrie had already suggested in 1894 that a period of 100 years had elapsed between the initial invasion of Asiaties and the establishment of the Hyksos 15th Dynasty.\textsuperscript{87}

If we pursue this line of argument, then the destruction of Jericho (40 years after the reign of Dudimose) should have taken place perhaps as much as 214 years before the fall of Avaris, the latter event now dated to c.1193 in the New Chronology. With a 15th Dynasty duration of 108 years\textsuperscript{88} the accession of Salitis would then be dated to c.1300 with nearly a century and a half allotted to the preceding Early Hyksos period.\textsuperscript{89} In other words, the fall of MB Jericho is to be placed within this Early Hyksos era in the new scheme (during or near the close of a short MB IIB of approximately 40 to 50 years, i.e. c.1450-1400), in close agreement with the traditional date of 1407 BC for the fall of Jericho as given in the Old Testament.

This would also tie in quite neatly with the story of the Israelite covenant initiated by Joshua (Joshua 24:25-26) at the Temple of Baal-berith in biblical Shechem (Tell Balata). The newly arrived Israelites can now be closely connected with the great MB IIB migdol-temple excavated by Sellin.
The Temple of Baal-berith at Shechem

Cross-section of the temple compound at Shechem, showing the position of the MB II migdal-temple in relation to the massebah (sacred pillar) and the earlier courtyard temple of MB IIA. [Illust: D. Rohl]

in the 1920s, which was found to lie over the site of the earlier MB IIA ‘court-yard-temple’ or sacred area (which in the New Chronology is associated with the ‘altar’ established there by Jacob in the 18th century BC [Genesis 33:18-20]). The attack upon the ‘migdal-Shechem’ and the burning alive of 1000 refugees therein by king Abimelech [Judges 9:42-49] in around 1170 BC would thus be associated with the destruction and abandonment of Sellin’s ‘Fortress-temple 1-b’ of Temenos 7 which occurred, according to the archaeological record, near the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (starting around 1230 BC in the New Chronology). This makes far better sense of the Abimelech narrative than identifying the much smaller Iron Age ‘Fortress-temple 2-b’ (Temenos 9) at Shechem (which may not be a temple at all) with the last stand of the Shechemites as described in Judges. It is doubtful that 1000 citizens could have sought refuge in the Iron Age building, but there would have been little difficulty in accommodating this large number in the MB fortress-temple with its double-towered entrance and huge cella.

An exciting new possible confirmation of our placement of the Conquest in the MB II era is the recent discovery at Hazor of a clay tablet in the Old Babylonian language. The broken tablet was found during the 1992 excavation season of the Israeli archaeological mission led by Professor Amnon Ben-Tor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The team was working down towards the palace of the MB Stratum XVI (on the Upper Tell) when the discovery was made. The tablet is datable to between 1750 and 1650 in the orthodox chronology (i.e. the period of MB IIIB). This is roughly the same time period as that given for three other tablets found during the excavations of Yigael Yadin in the 1950s. What seems to have caused some excitement amongst the archaeologists is the fact that the king of Hazor referred to in the text of the tablet is ‘Ibni-[Addu]’ (biblical ‘Jabin’) - the same name as that of the king of Hazor defeated by Joshua and the Israelites when the city was burnt and destroyed in around 1400 BC according to the biblical dating [Joshua 11]. MB Stratum XVI (and parts of the contemporary Stratum 3 on the Lower Tell) were severely burnt and destroyed according to Yadin’s original excavation results. In the New Chronology this would be the destruction wrought by Joshua’s forces at the end of MB IIIB. We now await with interest the anticipated discovery of the main palace archive at Hazor in the knowledge and expectation that this archive may provide us with the necessary proofs of a Conquest of Canaan by incoming Israelites (or kabiru) during the MBA rather than at the very end of the LBA as in the orthodox chronology. We may also expect correspondence from Jobab king of Merom.

The Temple of El-Berith

In the New Chronology the Shechem Migdal-Temple 1a (left) is identified with the ‘House of Millo’ or the ‘temple of the Lord of the Covenant’ (also Baal-berith) mentioned in the Book of Joshua [9:16, 20 & 9:46]. Migdal-Temple 1b (right) is then identified with the ‘Migdal-Shechem’ which, according to Judges 9:42-9, was destroyed by Abimelech in c.1170 BC, burning alive 1000 refugees therein. The
The remarkable excavations of the Austrian Institute for Egyptology at Tell ed-Daba in the eastern Nile Delta have revealed an amazing archaeological story. The site is now universally accepted as the city of Avaris, stronghold of the Hyksos 15th Dynasty and in the New Chronology, during the town’s earlier phase (strata H to G1), the major population centre of the Israelites throughout their long sojourn in Egypt. So what do the findings of Field Director Manfred Bietak tell us about the town’s population in the pre-Hyksos era?

The people of the MB IIA settlement are described as Egyptianised Canaanites living in fairly simple dwellings within enclosed compounds, situated in an eastern suburb of the town. Further to the west (in Area F) a ‘governers’ residence was built near to the end of the 12th Dynasty (Stratum d/2 = H). At first this took the form of a typical Syrian ‘Mittelsaal’ house which was later built over (Stratum d/1 = G/4) with a much more elaborate and substantial Egyptian-style palace. The ‘Canaanite’ population living in the suburbs to the east of the palace compound appear to have introduced long-haired sheep into the Eastern Delta which, along with pairs of donkeys and goats, were often buried at the entrances to the mudbrick burial vaults belonging to the heads of the households. Some of these Asiatics reached a high status in the community as is indicated by the important Canaanite tombs directly associated with the governor’s residence itself. At the end of Tell ed-Daba Stratum G (near the close of MB IIA) there appears to have been considerable hardship in the town to tooth enamel from human skeletal remains indicating obvious signs of malnutrition, probably to be associated with severe famine. Mass burials in shallow pits, right at the end of Stratum G on Tell A and Stratum c in Area F, also indicate a sudden catastrophe of some kind. Following this disaster, the Egyptianised Canaanite eastern suburb was abandoned for a period before a new group of non-Egyptianised Canaanites rebuilt the district on a completely new
In the New Chronology (which is not at present accepted by Professor Bietak) the archaeological findings of the Austrian team fit very well with our understanding of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt - during Strata H to G1 at Tell ed-Daba. Archaeology has revealed a disaster at Avaris near to the end of MB IIA. Evidence of sudden multiple deaths and what appears to be the subsequent departure of the early Canaanite population would fit well with the traditional Exodus narrative, whilst the new Canaanite group arriving at the site (Stratum F) could be seen as the first archaeological evidence for the occupation of the Delta by the Early Hyksos (perhaps to be equated with the Amalekites who, according to Exodus 17:8-16, clashed with the departing Israelites before they entered Sinai).

Further interesting findings from the excavations which should be mentioned are (a) the high proportion of infant burials at the site of Tell ed-Daba - some 65% of all interments on Tell A were those of children under two years of age (no demographic evidence for a preponderance of male infant burials to support the story in Exodus 1:15-22 is, of course, obtainable when dealing with infant remains; however, the female adult population was significantly greater than the male - a ratio of 1.4 to 1); and (b) the fact that the anthropological data indicates that a substantial part of the female population of Avaris originated from Syria (in the book of Genesis most of the Patriarchal males undertake marriage contracts with women from Haran in northern Syria - could this practice have been continued during the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt?).

A few words would perhaps be appropriate at this point in respect of the the Exodus 1:11 reference to the Israelites building the store cities of Raamses and Pithom. Raamses was of course the 19th-20th Dynasty capital city of Pi-Ramesse, long known to the scribes of the ancient Near East and therefore to the biblical writers exiled in Babylon. However, the city which had stood on the same site as the Ramesside foundation in the earlier periods was called hwt-wrt (i.e. Avaris). The biblical reference to the building of Raamses and Pithom (possibly Tell er-Retabi) by the Israelites should be seen in the same light as a modern encyclopaedia.
stating that the Romans built a garrison town at York when in fact the town was called Eboracum in the Roman era. The name Ramesses was associated with the Qantir/Tell ed-Daba region long after the city itself had been abandoned. It is therefore quite understandable for the biblical scribes residing in 6th-century Babylon to refer to the city of the Israelite Sojourn by the name in use in their own day rather than its older name of Avaris.

**Joseph - A 12th Dynasty Vizier**

Finally, a brief word on Joseph. As vizier of Egypt and a great land/tax reformer for Pharaoh, Joseph fits admirably into the late 12th Dynasty when Senusert III undertook sweeping changes in state organisation, returning much, if not all, of the regional administration into the hands of a central authority. Some time late in his reign, or early in that of his co-regent and successor Amenemhat III, the annual Nile flood rose dramatically (as recorded by the high Nile Level Texts at Semna) - an event which would have undoubtedly caused serious crop damage, leading to severe famine. Amenemhat III also appears to have undertaken similar large scale works in respect of Egypt's irrigation and water system - in particular in relation to Lake Moeris (Birket Qarun) in the Fayyum. Interestingly enough, the canal which feeds this system is called Bahr Yussef ('waterway of Joseph') - a tradition, linking Joseph to the region, which goes back to some distant period in Egypt's long and complex history.

It was near to the end of the 12th Dynasty that the city of Avaris was also originally founded - according to the excavation results from Tell ed-Daba (Stratum H = d/2). With our new date of c.1620 for the end of the 12th Dynasty in mind, can we not associate this new foundation with Joseph himself? We know that the Israelite popu-

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**Excursus: Joseph and his Brethren in Egypt**

1. Joseph became Vizier of Egypt at the age of 30 years [Genesis 41:46].
2. A 7-year period of prosperity was followed by a 7-year famine [Genesis 41:53-7].
3. Joseph undertook major agricultural reforms returning ownership of the land, and therefore grain production, to the pharaoh [Genesis 47:20].
5. They were shepherds and brought their flocks with them [Genesis 47:3-5].
6. Joseph left the pharaoh's palace and came to reside with Jacob's family [Genesis 50:22].
7. Joseph died in old age and was embalmed and buried in a coffin within the Israelite settlement, presumably near Rameses in the land of Goshen [Genesis 50:26].
8. When the Israelites departed from Egypt, Moses had the bones of Joseph removed from his tomb in Goshen in order for them to be taken for reburial in the Promised Land [Exodus 13:19].
of Moses, and taken out of Egypt by the departing Israelites who had initially assembled at Raamses (i.e. Avaris) to begin their long journey across Sinai to the Promised Land.

So, would it be stretching all credulity to imagine that we could identify the original tomb of Joseph at Tell ed-Daba? Perhaps, but let us consider for a moment the largest (and probably the earliest) tomb within the gardens of the ‘governor’s residence’ recently excavated by the Austrian mission at Tell ed-Daba. 97 This big vaulted mudbrick tomb, which possessed the only attached mortuary chapel so far found in the city (suggesting a cult for the deceased or some kind of ancestor worship), was found to be virtually empty - there was no body. It appears that it, and any accompanying burial goods, had been removed by means of a tunnel which was dug to gain access to the burial chamber not many generations after the sealing of the tomb. The chapel of this Tomb F/1-p/19:1 did, however, contain a quite remarkable find - a colossal statue of an Asiatic dignitary. The twice-life-size limestone statue, with red coloured ‘mushroom-shaped’ wig/hair and pale yellow skin colour, had been violently smashed into fragments and the head defaced. The surviving pieces show that this dignitary carried a throw-stick (one of the determinatives used in Egyptian writing to denote a foreigner) across the right breast, just as an official would bear his sceptre of office. Remnants of the original paint survive on the statue’s right shoulder indicating that the owner had been portrayed wearing a garment embroidered or woven in a multi-coloured design - a coat of many colours? Could the savage destruction of the statue be evidence of the local Egyptians’ revenge against the Israelites - directed towards the cult image of Joseph following the Exodus of his descendants out of Egypt? A highly speculative proposition - but one which is entirely consistent with an

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97 Tomb F/1-p/19:1 from Tell ed-Daba Area F - Stratum d/1 or d/2. [Illust: D. Rohl, after Bietak, op. cit. [97], p. 60]
Excavation of Tomb F-1/p-19:1 by the Austrian Tell ed-Daba Mission (March to June 1987). Foundation walls of the mud-brick superstructure have been exposed just below the modern surface, the building itself having been denuded by sebakhtim. The excavators have suggested the possibility that the tomb may have been surmounted by a mudbrick pyramid, with the mortuary chapel containing the colossal seated statue attached to its east face. Several pits from later levels can be seen around the structure. [Photo courtesy of the Institut für Ägyptologie, Vienna]

historical setting only made possible through the new lower chronological model on offer here. Being able to look upon the likeness of Joseph (albeit in such a forlorn condition), after an interval of nearly 3700 years, is a tantalising prospect indeed!

Summary

Let us briefly summarise what we have achieved by imposing the New Chronology of Egypt onto the archaeology and history of the Holy Land. I think it is fair to say that relations between ancient Egypt and ancient Israel have been resurrected from the lifeless corpse of the conventional chronology and brought to vibrant and energetic life. We have also exposed, in part, the many problems permeating Levantine archaeology (which derive from a serious chronological dislocation) and, at the same time, produced an archaeological model with much greater historical potential.

We have discussed the so-called Phoenician influences in Israelite art and architecture and come to the conclusion that there is virtually no evidence of Phoenician links to the archaeological record of Iron Age Palestine. To a large part, this is the case because of the absence of monumental architecture for the Lebanese Early Iron Age in comparison to the previous period: ‘... a review of the architectural-archaeological material on the Iron Age sites in Phoenicia is entirely negative, as the material stands today. This should be emphasized, for many publications continue to apply terminology which outwardly implies architectural evidence for the existence of cultural ties between Phoenicia and Israel in the Iron Age - while in fact all such evidence is either later in date or is derived from historical or biblical sources.’

This problem can be resolved, at least in part, by looking for our Phoenician connection in an earlier period - that is the end of the Late Bronze Age (LB IIIB). This is what is advocated in the New Chronology, and, in fact, what results from the proposed revision of the Egyptian Third Intermediate Period chronology (which, I should remind the reader, was revised almost entirely on the internal Egyptian evidence).

We have provided a new candidate for the biblical Pharaoh Shishak in Ramesses II who actually records the conquest of a city called Shalem, an ancient name of Jerusalem. With Saul and David equated with the Levantine habiru chieftains of the el-Amarna era and Solomon as a contem-
porary of Haremheb, we can put forward possible Israelite ties with Ugart, as well as Bronze Age Byblos, Tyre and Sidon. We also have new Solomonic monumental ashlar-built architecture at Megiddo VII associated with treasures of ivory and gold. We even have the representation of a ruler seated on a lion/sphinx throne from Megiddo VIIA who may be Solomon himself.

Furthermore, we have been able to demonstrate that the pre-Hyksos strata at Tell ed-Daba could provide direct archaeological evidence for the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt. In simple terms, the MB IIIA Egyptianised Asiatic community of Avars which resided in the eastern suburbs of the town prior to the arrival of the Hyksos groups (MB IIB/C) was none other than the proto-Israelites upon whom the later biblical traditions of Sojourn, Bondage and Exodus were based.

In this second brief introduction to the New Chronology I have attempted to bring the early Israelite kings out of the mists of mythology and reestablish them and their associated cultures back at the centre of the archaeological stage. Whether scholarship is ready to accept such radical proposals is yet to be seen. It is at least hoped that constructive criticism will be offered from areas outside my own field, and that those academic scholars whose disciplines have been affected by this paper will open up the debate by instigating discussions within the student body of their own university departments.

Notes and References


2. Postgraduates and scholars who have made significant contributions to New Chronology research include: Aidan Dodson, John Franks, Peter James, Nikos Kokkinos, Bill Manley, Robert Morkot, Jack Ogden, David Rohl, and Ian Thorpe. It should be noted, however, that the views expressed in this paper are my own and are not necessarily held by the aforementioned researchers.

3. Others, outside the British universities so far spearheading the debate, who have made substantial contributions include: Jeremy Goldberg, Lester Mitcham, Wayne Mitchell, Bernard Newgrose, Robert Porter, Steven Robinson, and Peter van der Veer; useful criticisms have also been received from Nicolas Coldstream, Mike Baillie, Vrenny Hankey, Barry Kemp, Kenneth Kitchen, Anthony Rees, and Colin Renfrew.

4. P. James et al.: Centuries of Darkness (London, 1991). The New Chronology was first brought to the attention of scholars in SIS Workshop 5:2 (1982); this paper appeared in New Chronology: issues has continued within the pages of both SIS Review (since 1986 Chronology and Catastrophism Review) and SIS Workshop (now Chronology and Catastrophism Workshop).


6. The minimum revision is based solely on the archaeological evidence at Tanis (i.e. the 141 years between the orthodoxy burial dates of Akheperre Paseennes and Osorkon II) whilst retaining the identification of Shoshak with Shoshenq 1; the maximum revision exploits all possible avenues for shortening 20th to 25th Dynasty chronology whilst tentatively proposing to identify the 925 BC attack upon Judah by Shishak with the Year 8 Assyrian campaign of Rameses II.


8. See M. Ibrahim & D. Rohl: 'Apis and the Serapeum' in JACF 2 (1988), pp. 6-26; it would be possible to argue that there is another missing year between Year 21 of Psamtek I and his Year 22 Apis burial.


10. See JACF 1, pp. 57-8.

11. Ibid., pp. 57-8.


15. See II Kings 3.

16. See M. Bietak: 'Problems of Middle Bronze Age Chronology: New Evidence from Egypt' in AJA 88 (1984), p. 472, where he states: 'Palestinian chronology is dependent on Egyptian absolute chronology. Therefore, it would be methodologically wrong to date the Tell el-Dab'a's sequence according to the Palestinian dates in order to find its position within the Egyptian framework. It is far more reliable to obtain absolute dates for the Tell el-Dab'a's sequence from Egyptian material excavated at that site within the MB sequence. We can then correlate these findings with current Palestinian chronologies and thereby achieve a double check on their accuracy.'


Part of a wall painting from the tomb of Khnumhotep at Beni Hassan (dated to the reign of the immediate predecessor of Senuseret III), showing a group of Asians, under the leadership of Abishal, entering Egypt. Both the women and men wear garments with complex geometric designs - 'coats of many colours'. According to the biblical tradition, Joseph was brought down to Egypt to be sold into slavery by just such a group of 'Midianites'. In the New Chronology, the appearance of the Asians portrayed in Khnumhotep's tomb is just a generation earlier than the descent of Joseph into Egypt.
27. See II Chronicles 8:5.
30. ibid.
33. Kenyon, op. cit. [29], p. 104.
34. Kenyon, op. cit. [29], p. 102.
37. ibid.
41. ibid., p. 133.
42. ibid., p. 135.
43. ibid., p. 139.
44. ibid., p. 132.
50. See Papyrus Anastasi II (BM 10247) - translation in ANET pp. 475-79.
51. The city of Salem is attested in Genesis 14:18, Judith 4:4, Psalm 76:2, and Hebrews 7:1 & 7:2; the name Sheshlam is believed to have the meaning ‘House of Shalem’.
52. In the New Testament (John 3:23) the name Shalem is associated with a place along the banks of the River Jordan where John the Baptist baptized Jesus.
56. K. Kenyon, ‘Exca
57. Kenyon, op. cit. [56] (1963), p.13, states: ‘There was not a great deal in the way of finds in the fill, but there was enough pottery, including a few sherds of the Hellenistic period, to show that the date is c. 14th century B.C.’.
66. This identification was brought to my attention by P. van der Veen [personal communication, 1989].
68. Psalm 104 - see BAR May/June, 1987, p. 27.
72. Josephus: Contra Apionem i. 14, 75-76.
77. Others who had previously argued that a natural catastrophe acted as the catalyst for the Exodus include I. Velikovsky, op. cit. [73] and V. Clube & B. Napier: The Cosmic Serpent (London, 1982) - both books propose a celestial agent rather than a terrestrial eruption.
81. I have been informed by John Binns (personal communication, September 1992) that Bryant Wood is convinced that he has located several samples of bichrome ware from the Garant Jericho dig (now housed in the Louvre and Rockefeller Museums). This would certainly affect the arguments I have put forward if true, but until these samples have been studied by other specialists and agreed to be bichrome ware, judgment perhaps ought to be suspended on the issue. For the debate between Wood and Kempinski on the dating of Jericho’s destruction see BAR Sept/Oct 1990.
83. Kempinski, op. cit. [80], p. 147.
84. Ward, op. cit. [82], p. 170-72.
86. Josephus: Contra Apionem i, 14, 77.
88. The surviving fragment bearing the Hyskos total gives 100 + x years, although scholars who had previously made a close study of the document generally accepted the figure of 108 years as proposed by Farina and confirmed by Seyffarth. This is not in agreement with the total for the Hyskos dynasty in the Eusebius redemption of Meneth which gives 103 years for his 17th Dynasty of ‘Shepherds’ - the nearest Manethonian figure to the total given in the Royal Canon.
89. With the accession of Nebhepet re at c. 1535 BC, through the Yadin/Zimmerman/Hammarabi synchronisms, we can calculate the accession of Sebekhotep IV at c. 1523 (taking the reign years given in Column VI of the Royal Canon). Using an average reign length of 5.6 years for the only two rulers following Sebekhotep whose reign-lengths are lost (calculating this figure from the extant reign-lengths of kings 1 to 8 from Column VII), we arrive at a date of c.

One of the gruesome mass burial pits from the end of Stratum G at Avaris. The bodies have been thrown into the grave without funerary goods. A number of similar emergency burial pits, dug at the same time moment, have been found at different locations on the tell. [Photo courtesy of the Institut für Ägyptologie, Vienna]
Head and shoulders of the colossal statue from Tomb F/1-p19:1 at Avaris. [Photo: D. Rohl]

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Preliminary chart of approximate stratigraphic correlations between the main sites of Palestine and the archaeological periods according to the New Chronology.

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