

## **Palestinian Artifactual Evidence Supporting the Early Date of the Exodus**

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### THE ISSUE AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Assuming that Solomon built the temple ca. 970-960 B.C., the biblical numerical notices pertaining to the date of the Exodus in 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26 yield a mid-fifteenth century B.C. date for the Exodus.<sup>1</sup> But, in spite of these specific statements by the ancient historians, most contemporary Syro-Palestinian archaeologists and Old Testament historians date the Exodus about one hundred and fifty years later.<sup>2</sup>

Now the issue whether the Exodus occurred at ca. 1440 B.C. or ca. 1290 B.C. merits the attention being given to it by serious scholars of the Old Testament for at least two reasons. (1) Either the biblical prophet-historians have committed a historical blunder, and therefore the Bible is less than a completely trustworthy historical document on which man can rest his faith,<sup>3</sup> or the numbers in the Bible must

1 Working back from the death of Ahab in 853 B.C., and calculating an interval of 78 years between the accession of Jeroboam I, Thiele secures the date 931 B.C. as the year of Jeroboam's accession. See E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, 1965), pp.35-52.

2 Joseph Callaway, "New Evidence on the Conquest of <sup>c</sup>Ai," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXVII (September, 1968), 313. Callaway says: "Professor W. F. Albright's view that the Conquest occurred in the latter part of the thirteenth century B.C. has generally prevailed." For a study of the history of this problem in a succinct form see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1969), pp. 174-77.

3 H. H. Rowley, *The Re-Discovery of the Old Testament* (London, 1945), pp.42-47.

be interpreted as meaning something other than their face value.<sup>4</sup> If one opts for the second hypothesis he raises the question whether or not the Bible can be interpreted literally in other areas as well. (2) In addition to this theological and hermeneutical consideration, the question is also vital for historical reasons. All biblical chronology, the backbone of history, down to the Kingdom Period depends on this date.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, those who accept the grammatico-historical method of interpreting the Bible, which is by far the most commonly accepted method, must interpret all passages affected by this issue according to the appropriate historical background.

### THE METHOD OF DECIDING THE ISSUE

Now while the writer has implicit faith in the Scriptures apart from man's verification of them, he has chosen in this article for its apologetic value to appraise some of the archaeological evidence related to the problem. In the article he hopes to make a modest contribution toward deciding the date of the Exodus by setting the date of the Conquest which occurred approximately forty years later. But by what accredited method can one decide the date of the Conquest? Here the writer proposes to compare the pertinent Palestinian artifactual evidence with the pertinent Old Testament textual evidence without consciously suppressing evidence. If these two lines of evidence regarding the Conquest coincide, and if the artifactual evidence can be dated, it seems reasonable to think that the date of the Conquest can be established.

Now according to the textual evidence the Israelites took the Canaanite cities in two different ways: most of them they occupied without first destroying them; but they burned three, Jericho (Josh. 6:24), Ai (Josh. 8:28), and Hazor (Josh. 11:13). The writer will consider first the cities they occupied without burning, and then he will consider the three cities they burned.

With regard to the cities occupied by the Israelites without burning, the adherents to the theory of the late date of the Exodus commit two fundamental errors. First, they set aside the textual evidence that these cities were not burned before the Israelites occupied them, and instead they presume that the Israelite capture of a

<sup>4</sup> Harrison, p. 317.

<sup>5</sup> J. Barton Payne, *An Outline of Hebrew History* (Grand Rapids, 1954), pp.34-36.

town is likely to be marked by destruction.<sup>6</sup> But the biblical historian's account of the Conquest recorded in Joshua flatly contradicts this presumption. He recorded: "Israel did not burn any city which stood on its tell, except Hazor only, that did Joshua burn" (Josh. 11:13). Now admittedly he referred in this statement to the "tells of Northern Palestine, but his account of the capture of the tells in Southern Palestine states only that Joshua "took" (*laqad*) them.<sup>7</sup> By contrast in the case of Ai and Jericho he stated that Joshua "burned" (*saraph*) them. By taking most of the Canaanite cities without first destroying them, Joshua would have fulfilled Yahweh's promise to Israel: "to give you great and splendid cities which you did not build; houses filled with all kinds of goods which you did not put there" (Deut. 6:10-11). Cities burned to the ground do not yield to their captors houses filled with all kinds of goods.

Secondly, having set aside the biblical textual evidence, the late date critic now commits the logical error of circular reasoning. Confident from the Egyptian artifactual evidence that the Conquest occurred at ca. 1250 B.C.,<sup>8</sup> he interprets the destruction layers dated in the second half of the thirteenth century B.C., and attested at a number of hill country sites (Tell Beit Mirsim C<sup>2</sup>, Beth-Shemesh IVb?, Hazor Lower Canaanite City I, Lachish Temple III, Bethel L.B.), as the result of the Israelite invasion.<sup>9</sup> Having interpreted these mute layers of destruction by his assumption, he now uses this evidence to support his thesis that the Israelites brought the Canaanite Bronze Age to an end in the mid-thirteenth century B.C.<sup>10</sup> The argument is obviously circular and not convincing. Critics of the late date theory have long pointed out that other historical events could account for these layers of destruction; viz., the raids into Palestine carried out by Merneptah of Egypt ca. 1230 B.C.,<sup>11</sup> or the raids of

6 Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (3rd ed.; London, 1970) [hereafter AHL], p. 209.

7 Leon T. Wood, "Date of the Exodus," *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. by J. Barton Payne (Waco, Texas, 1970), p. 75.

8 G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 60, 71. Regarding the location of Pithom and Raamses (Exod. 1: 11) see now E. P. Uphill, "Pithom and Raamses," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, XXVII (October, 1968), 291-316, XVIII (January, 1969), 15-39.

9 G. Ernst Wright, "The Archaeology of Palestine," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. by G. Ernst Wright (Garden City, New York, 1961), p. 94.

10 William Foxwell Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (2nd ed.; Garden City, New York, 1957), p. 13.

11 For translation of Hymn of Victory of Mer-ne-Ptah (The "Israel Stela") see *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. by James B. Pritchard (Princeton, 1955), p. 376.

the People of the Sea at ca. 1200 B.C.,<sup>12</sup> or by the Israelites in their continuing seesaw struggle with the Canaanites during the time of the Judges.<sup>13</sup>

Now the writer proposes that in order not to commit the first error of disregarding the textual evidence one should examine the material culture and the pottery during the period 1400 B.C. to 1200 B.C. instead of the destruction levels at these hill country sites. Now it is a fact that wherever within this period one puts the arrival of the Israelites, there is no complete break in the culture within the period.<sup>14</sup> This should come as no surprise for migratory tribes such as the Israelites had been would not be expected to carry large equipment or durable material objects. Their containers may well have been made mainly of skin, and their place of worship was portable and temporary, a tent. Kenyon wrote: "History and archaeology show again and again how such bands, coming amongst a settled population, tend to adopt the material culture (which alone is reflected archaeologically) of that population."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, while it is a fact that there is no complete break in the material culture, it is also a fact that the sharpest change in the culture occurs at the transition from Late Bronze I to Late Bronze IIA (ca. 1400 B.C.). Concerning this fact Kenyon wrote: ". . . at the beginning . . . the biggest change occurs, with the transition from L.B.I to II, when the culture does seem to show a marked deterioration. In the pottery, for instance, there is the introduction of a class of saucer bowls of a very plain and undeveloped form, which form one of the least attractive series in the whole of Palestinian pottery. The archaeological remains are undistinguished and the objects found suggest a low level of artistic ability."<sup>16</sup> The crude art of the period is well represented by a stone libation tray from Tell Beit Mirsim.<sup>17</sup> Kenyon noted: "Such a situation would well reflect the state of affairs during the acclimatisation to settled life of wanderers such as the Habiru bands of the Amarna Letters and the Israelites of the Old Testament."<sup>18</sup> In a word, the material culture suggests the date

12 Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, rev. trans. by P. R. Ackroyd (2nd ed.; London, 1960), p. 82.

13 Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1954), pp. 162-63, 165.

14 Kenyon, *AHL*, p. 209.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

17 William Foxwell Albright, *The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim*, Vol. 11, *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, XVII (1938), 120, pl. 24.

18 Kenyon, *AHL*, p. 209.

1400 B.C. as the most likely time for the Israelite occupation of these cities.

Moreover, it must not be assumed that the Israelites could not have been responsible for the Canaanite temples<sup>19</sup> and the crude Astarte plaques which are the most common cult object on almost all the sites of this period,<sup>20</sup> for the historian who wrote the book of Judges bitterly recalls Israel's continual practice of adopting the Canaanite religion in preference to the more austere religion of Yahweh.<sup>21</sup> Even during the prophetic period abundant artifactual evidence has been unearthed attesting the prophetic denunciations that the Israelites adopted the Canaanite cult.<sup>22</sup>

Now if the Israelites were responsible for this marked deterioration in the material cultures in the cities of the hill country at the beginning of Late Bronze (ca. 1400 B.C.) it follows that the same situation ought not to prevail in the great cities in the north, Bethshan and Megiddo on the borders of the Plain of Esdraelon, since they did not fall into Israelite hands until comparatively late.<sup>23</sup> Now remarkably, this is precisely the situation. With regard to Megiddo Kenyon noted: "Megiddo presents a contrast to the other sites for which we have evidence, for the level of culture here does not seem to reach such a low ebb. The buildings, as far as they have been excavated, have indications of architectural pretensions. The pottery is not so exceedingly uninteresting, for the crude saucer forms found on other sites are hardly present here, and the pottery decoration

19 For example, Temples II and III in the Fosse at Tell Duweir. Olga Tufnell, Charles H. Inge, Lankester Harding, *Lachish II: The Fosse Temple* (London, 1940).

20 William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (3rd ed.; Baltimore, 1953), p. 115.

21 Judges 2:11 fl.

22 For example, the little model sanctuary found at Tell el-Far<sup>ah</sup> dated in the 10th or 9th century B.C., and similar to several other pious household objects found in Cyprus, at Megiddo, and in Transjordan. See R. de Vaux, "The Excavations at Tell el-Far<sup>ah</sup> and the Site of Ancient Tirzah," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* [hereafter PEQ], 1956, p. 132. Gowan goes so far as to say: "The phenomenon of syncretism scarcely needs extensive discussion in this paper. One need only read the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings to be convinced that Israelite worship from the Conquest on was thoroughly mingled with aspects of the Canaanite fertility religion, and that this was not, for the majority of Israelites, considered apostasy, but was the commonly accepted thing" (Donald E. Gowan, "The Syncretistic Cult in Israel," *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. by J. Coert Rylaarsdam [Chicago, 1968], pp. 96-97).

23 Judges 1:19.

found during L.B. I has its continuation, though it is less elaborate. Most striking of all is the collection of ivories found in the ruins of the palace in the second phase of VII, which provide an indication of the cultural tastes at least of the ruling classes."<sup>24</sup> She concluded: "Megiddo, therefore, though it may have had a share in political disturbances, was not submerged in the increasing tide of barbarism."<sup>25</sup> Beth-shan likewise exhibits a high degree of civilization.<sup>26</sup> Now to be sure, this archaeological evidence does not conclusively prove that the presence of Israelites occasioned the cultural decline in many strong cities and their absence explains the greater degree of civilization in those cities along the great land route controlled by the Egyptians. But it must be agreed that the literary evidence of Joshua-Judges comports favorably with the only valid archaeological evidence, and that this evidence points to an invasion of migratory bands such as the Israelites would have been at about 1400 B.C.

#### THE CITIES BURNED ON THEIR TELLS

The writer now turns his attention to the cities burned on their tells: Ai, Jericho, and Hazor respectively.

##### AI

Most recently David Livingston in a superb article on the identification of biblical Bethel and Ai, has brought together strong objections to the common identification of historical Ai with Et-Tell. Rather, he argues in detail that Bireh is to be identified with Bethel. If this identification should prove to be right some small unnamed ruin one and a half miles to the southeast, and on the other side of a high hill (Et-Tawil) may be biblical Ai.<sup>27</sup> Regarding this new suggestion D. J. Wiseman, professor of Assyriology at the University of London, writes:

It must be emphasized that this new suggestion of Mr. Livingston must remain an unproven theory until checked by archaeological soundings at both places for the evidence for the identification and location of Bethel and Ai is interrelated. By noting this new theory here, the reader is reminded that the validity of the biblical text and history will remain unchanged despite often changing interpretations and hypotheses concerning it. Much archaeological work and interpretation falls far short of positive and conclusive evidence.

24 Kenyon, *AHL*, pp. 215, 218.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 218.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 218-19.

27 David Livingston, "Location of Biblical Bethel and Ai," *The Westminster Theological Journal*, XXXIII (November, 1970), 20-44.

This is especially the case in identifying places from which no epigraphic evidence has been produced. . . . Pending sure identification the student of the Bible has every right to hold to the explicit statement of Scripture rather than to any passing idea even though the latter may seem to support him.<sup>28</sup>

Until the site of ancient Ai is located this enigmatic city must continue to remain without consideration in deciding the issue.

### JERICHO

The writer now turns to the most disputed site, Jericho (Tell es-Sultan). The biblical historians give these three statements about Jericho during this disputed period that are subject to archaeological research: (1) when the Israelites conquered the city the walls collapsed (Josh. 6:20), (2) the Israelites burned the city (Josh. 6:24), and (3) the city was probably reoccupied shortly after the Conquest, first by the Benjamites, and then by Eglon (ca. 1320 B.C. according to the chronology of Judges) (Josh. 18:21, Judg. 3:12-14). Now even though little remains on the tell from the Late Bronze Age probably because of its long exposure between the Israelite invasion and the time of Ahab,<sup>29</sup> the writer will consider these features respectively.

*The walls.* Everyone but the most naive tourist knows now that Garstang's "Late Bronze Age" walls which he associated with the Israelite invasion actually date from the Early Bronze Age, over five hundred years before Joshua, because Miss Kenyon subsequently identified both Early Bronze Age remains with these walls, and Middle Bronze Age material overlaying them.<sup>30</sup> She wrote: "It is a sad fact that of the town walls of the Late Bronze Age, within which period the attack of the Israelites must fall by any dating, not a trace remains."<sup>31</sup>

*The burnt debris.* But in the upper levels of the store rooms joining the palace on the knoll, located on the slope, and first built in the Middle Bronze Age, there is debris accumulation merging with the overlying "Streak," the term the original excavators used to describe a well-defined stratigraphical feature which is "*clearly burnt material washed down the hill*" [italics mine].<sup>32</sup> Now both the upper debris in the store rooms and the "Streak" contained a con-

28 D. J. Wiseman, "Ai in Ruins," *Buried History*, VII (March, 1971), 5-6.

29 Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Digging Up Jericho* (New York, 1957) [hereafter *DUJ*], p. 263.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 170.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 261-62.

siderable quantity of pottery from the first half of the fourteenth century. Having analyzed the pottery "from the upper level above the ruins of the store rooms" and "from the 'Streak' of debris above the store rooms," Kenyon concluded: "As a group, the pottery has connections with Megiddo Level VIII (1479 B.c.-1350 B.C.), but also definite links with VII. The closest Beth-shan parallels are to Stratum IX (first half fourteenth century)."<sup>33</sup> Miss Kenyon rejected the analysis of Albright and Garstang that it can be related to forms from the second half of the thirteenth century. She wrote: "The closeness of the material to Beth-shan IX is generally admitted, and both Professor Garstang and Professor Albright also link it with Stratum VIII (second half of fourteenth century B.C.). On the published evidence, it does not, however, seem to be very close to that from the later level, and the Jericho group can at most just overlap, but not equate with it."<sup>34</sup> In a word, according to Kenyon, the latest burnt debris from the Late Bronze Age city cannot be dated later than mid-fourteenth century B.C., and probably belongs to the L.B. IIA period (1410 B.c.-1340 B.C.). Now admittedly she formed this conclusion about the pottery about twenty years ago, but in the 1970 edition of her work, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, she still refers her readers to this article written in 1951,<sup>35</sup> and she does not modify her statements in the appendix.<sup>36</sup>

Now can the fall of the city be dated more precisely during the Late Bronze IIA period? Garstang argued convincingly that the Conquest must have occurred before the reign of Akhenaten, who began to reign ca. 1375 B.C., because: (1) not one of the distinctive, plentiful, and well-established archaeological criteria characteristic of Akhenaten's reign has been found in either the city or the tombs;<sup>37</sup> (2) there is no reference to Jericho in the Amarna letters dated to Akhenaten's reign, though numerous cities of Canaan are mentioned frequently;<sup>38</sup> (3) there is no scarab after Amenhotep III (1412 B.C.-1375 B.C.) though there survived an abundant and continuous series of scarabs of the Egyptian kings from the Middle Bronze Age right on down through the reign of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and

32 Kathleen M. Kenyon, "Some Notes on the History of Jericho," *PEQ*, 1951, p. 120.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 130-33.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

35 Kenyon, *AHL*, pp. 210-11.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 341-43.

37 John Garstang and J. B. E. Garstang, *The Story of Jericho* (London, 1948), p. 126.

38 *Ibid.*

Amenhotep III of the Late Bronze I period.<sup>39</sup> Confessedly these are all negative evidences and may be subject to other explanations than that the Canaanite city ceased to exist before 1375 B.C.,<sup>40</sup> but together they lead to the plausible suggestion that the destruction of the city previously established by the ceramic evidence between 1410 B.C. and 1340 B.C. occurred before 1375 B.C.

*The evidence of occupation after the destruction of Late Bronze Age IIA.* Now the latest pottery from tombs 4, 5, and 13 is best dated to the second-half of the fourteenth century.<sup>41</sup> Garstang related this pottery to the later, unimportant, sporadic habitation suggested in the Old Testament, and expected because of the advantageous situation of the site.<sup>42</sup> Kenyon, on the other hand, held that this pottery (exhibits Canaanite occupation until about 1325 B.C. at which time the Canaanites abandoned the tell.<sup>43</sup>

In order to clarify this evidence from the tombs appeal is now made to the "Middle Building" found on the tell.<sup>44</sup> Was it built during the fourteenth century Canaanite occupation? or was it built after the destruction attested in Late Bronze IIA?

Garstang originally ascribed the Middle Building to the city conquered by Joshua.<sup>45</sup> But with the generally accepted revision of the dating of the pottery from Beth-shan downward he revised the date of the building down to the second half of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>46</sup> On this erroneous basis, as it appears to the writer, he suggested that the building was intrusive and possibly to be attributed to Eglon, King of Moab, at the end of the century.<sup>47</sup>

Kenyon, however, noted that no ceramic dating evidence is published from the Middle Building itself.<sup>48</sup> But even though the building could not be dated by ceramic evidence, she attempted to date it by stratigraphic evidence. On this basis she originally con-

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 115-18, 126-27.

40 For example, Kenyon explains the scarabs of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and Amenhotep III as heirlooms to fit her theory that the tell was abandoned during L.B. I (see Kenyon, *PEQ*, p. 117). While this is a possible explanation it is also a possibility that their names were engraved on the scarabs after their death because scarabs were believed to possess protective powers. The names of well-known and popular rulers recur very frequently on these mantic objects (Palestine Museum, Gallery Book No.1, Nos. 1417-1441, unpublished).

41 Kenyon, *PEQ*, p. 138.

42 Garstang, pp. 124, 127-28.

43 Kenyon, *DUJ*, p. 261.

44 Called the "Middle Building" because it was found between the block building of Ahab's time and the storerooms of the Bronze Age.

45 Garstang, p. 177.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 171-80.

47 Kenyon, *AHL*, p. 210; *PEQ*, p. 121.

48 Kenyon, *DUJ*, p. 261; *AHL*, pp. 210-11.

cluded that Garstang's interpretation of the building after all was clear. In her original article she wrote: "It is clear from photographs and from published section. . . that most of what survived was foundational, and therefore was dug into the surrounding layers. These layers consisted of the upper debris in the store rooms and the 'Streak'. . . . From the stratification it is quite clear that these have nothing to do with the Middle Building, but represent the pre-existing accumulation."<sup>49</sup> Now if the "Streak" can be dated by its pottery between 1400 B.C. and 1350 B.C., and if the Middle Building was dug into the surrounding layers, then the building must be later than the destruction represented by these layers and must be dated after 1340 B.C. In her later writings, however, Miss Kenyon reversed herself, and without producing any new evidence, she erroneously dated the building by the debris beneath it.<sup>50</sup>

If then a substantial building such as the Middle Building was secondarily introduced on the tell after the destruction represented by the "Streak," one has good reason to think that the few recognizably late pottery examples from the tombs belong to this occupation and cannot be used to date the Conquest.

Finally, in connection with the subsequent occupation of the tell after its destruction, there is no evidence of any occupation after 1325 B.C. Kenyon insisted: "There is no evidence at all of it in stray finds or in tombs."<sup>51</sup>

*Conclusion.* Although meager, yet the textual and the archaeological evidence regarding Jericho in Late Bronze IIA and B remarkably coincide, and once again the archaeological evidence suggests a conquest during the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Even more conclusive, however, is the evidence that the city was not occupied during the mid-thirteenth century B.C., thereby precluding the option of the commonly accepted late date for the Exodus.

## HAZOR

The writer now considers Hazor, the third city burned on its tell. The site of Hazar (*Tell el-Qedah/Tell Waqqas*) comprises two distinct areas: the Tell proper, covering less than twenty-five acres, and a large rectangular plateau covering more than one hundred and seventy-five acres, called by the most recent excavators "the Lower Canaanite City." Yigael Yadin, et al. have reached the

49 Kenyon, *PEQ*, p. 120.

50 Kenyon, *DUJ*, pp. 262-63.

51 *Ibid.*

Solomonic period but have not as yet reached the Bronze Age strata I on the Tell proper.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand they have disclosed on the Lower Canaanite City the earliest stratum dated at the second part of the Middle Bronze Age [ca. 1750 B.C.] while the latest belongs to the end of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>53</sup> Professor Aharoni, one of the team that excavated the Tell, however, assured his readers that this violent and long lasting end of the Late Bronze Age marked the end of Canaanite occupation on the high tell as well.<sup>54</sup> Likewise in their principal publications on the excavations the teams asserted that they think they know the synchronization between the strata of the Lower Canaanite City and the strata of the Upper City.<sup>55</sup> Presumably they are the same.

Now the Lower Canaanite City in the Late Bronze Age has three main strata, each of which ends with a destruction layer.<sup>56</sup> Of interest here are these destruction layers for they belong to the disputed period between ca. 1400 B.C. and 1200 B.C. The earliest destruction layer related to our discussion terminated Stratum III, dated Late Bronze I, and belongs to the Pre-Amarna Age, *viz.*, about 1400 B.C. The recent excavators recorded: "Stratum 1B [=General Stratum II] was built after stratum 2 [=General Stratum III] had been completely destroyed."<sup>57</sup> In an earlier report regarding the destruction of the gate built on the gate of Middle Bronze II and before the final destruction of Hazor, so presumably belonging to the destruction of about 1400 B.C., Yadin wrote: "This gate must have been destroyed in a violent conflagration, traces of burnt bricks of its inner walls and the ashes of the burnt beams still cover the floors in thick heaps."<sup>58</sup>

General Stratum II (=Late Bronze IIA) likewise ends with a destruction level at the end of ca. 1300 B.C. The final report reads: "It can be determined. . . that Stratum 1B [=General Stratum II] is the stratum of El-Amarna age at Hazor . . . The end of Stratum 1B may also perhaps be fixed with the help of the tomb-finds and the finds on the floors of the buildings. As stated, the imported finds

52 Yigael Yadin, *et al.*, *Hazor I* (Jerusalem, 1958), p. 1.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

54 Yahanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible* (London, 1968), p. 207.

55 Yigael Yadin, *et al.*, *Hazor II* (Jerusalem, 1960); p. 165.

56 See the synchronization table of the strata in the Lower Canaanite City in Yadin, *Hazor II*, p. 165.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

58 Yigael Yadin, "The Fourth Season of Excavation at Hazor," *Biblical Archaeologist*, XXII (February, 1959), 8-9.

in the Tombs have nothing later than the end of the 14th century."<sup>59</sup>  
A paragraph later they spoke of the end of Stratum 1B in terms of  
"its destruction."<sup>60</sup>

General Stratum I (=Late Bronze IIB, ca. 1300-1260/30)  
likewise ends in destruction. They concluded: "This enables us to  
state that City 1A [=General Stratum I] began at the opening of  
the 13th century. . . . The few Mycenaean wares belonging to type  
IIIB enable the end of the stratum to be dated not later than the  
last third of the 13th century. . . . It may be concluded that City  
1A was destroyed in the second third of the 13th century."<sup>61</sup>

There are then from the Late Bronze Age Canaanite city, layers  
of destruction at ca. 1400 B.C., ca. +1300 B.C. and ca. +1230 B.C.  
Moreover, there is no occupation after 1230 B.C. on the Lower  
Canaanite City and a probable gap on the Tell between 1230 B.C.  
and the era of Solomon. The interpretive problem then is: "With  
which of these three strata shall one associate Joshua?" Most prob-  
ably Yadin is correct in his suggestion that the destruction level at  
ca. +1300 B.C. should be associated with the burning of the city by  
Seti I (ca. 1318 B.C.).<sup>62</sup> So then one is left with the destruction levels  
at 1400 B.C. and 1230 B.C. Yadin opted for the 1230 B.C. level. The  
report concluded: "This destruction should be related (according to  
Yadin) to the Israelite Conquest."<sup>63</sup>

But the reference in Judges 4:2 to Hazor as a Canaanite City in  
opposition to Israel still in the time of Barak at least three or four  
generations after Joshua precludes this possibility. If the city ceased  
to exist after 1230 B.C., and if it is still in existence at least three or  
four generations after Joshua, then Joshua's destruction cannot be  
attributed to the destruction level dated at 1230 B.C. but must be  
related to the destruction level dated at ca. 1400 B.C. To the writer's  
knowledge M. B. Rowton, assistant professor at the Oriental Insti-  
tute, University of Chicago, was the first to note this decisive evidence  
for the early date of the Conquest.<sup>64</sup> This battle between Jabin, king

59 Yadin, *Hazor II*, p. 159.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 160.

61 *Ibid.*

62 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 165.

64 M. B. Rowton, "Ancient Western Asia," *The Cambridge Ancient History*,  
ed. by I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, and N. G. L. Hammond (2nd ed.; Cam-  
bridge: At the University Press, 1970), I, pt. 1,237-39. In fairness to Rowton's  
position it should be noted that he is of the opinion that it is premature to  
attempt a date for the Exodus because he believes that more evidence is  
needed to indicate whether one has to reckon with one Exodus or two Exoduses.

of Hazar, and Barak, he further argued, presumably was fought during a period when Egyptian control had broken down. Moreover, because of the presence of Mycenaean IIIB pottery in the last stratum, he reasoned that the exact period of Egyptian weakness was in the second half of the thirteenth century. So then, the battle can be dated to this period. If this line of reasoning is valid, the chronological notices in Judges taken in conjunction with the anchor date of ca. 1230 B.C. would yield a date for Joshua's conquest during the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

Now the adherents to the late date of Exodus have reacted to Rowton's apparently decisive evidence for an early Conquest in two ways: K. A. Kitchen, on one hand, suggests that either the location of Hazor at the time of Barak differed from its location in the time of Joshua, or that the city of Barak's time has escaped the excavators.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, Aharoni, although not directly addressing himself to Rowton's thesis, vitiated Rowton's argument by his acceptance of Mazar's theory that the two accounts in Joshua 1 and Judges 4 are reversed.<sup>66</sup> According to this theory the two wars do not belong to the first stage of penetration but to a later period, and the battle of Merom (Joshua 11:1-9) was eventually associated with Joshua. He supports his position by these three arguments: (1) in both accounts Jabin is king, (2) according to the account in Joshua Hazor was totally destroyed,<sup>67</sup> and (3) the results of a Galilee survey show a stage of occupation that preceded the Conquest of the Canaanite district.

Against Kitchen's argument that the name became associated with a new site the writer makes these two points: First, his argument is *ad hoc* and has no convincing textual support. Second, although in the judgment of the writer Kitchen has no convincing textual support, Kitchen does correctly note that Jabin II's main strength is "curiously" not in Hazor but with Sisera in Harosheth.<sup>68</sup> Now the apparent weakness of Hazor at the time of Barak finds archaeological support in the final Canaanite stratum at *Tell el-Qedah/Tel Waqqas*. Before the city's final destruction a sharp decline took place. This is especially noticeable in the Lower City which evidently ceased to be fortified in Stratum I. Its temples were aban-

65 K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 67-68.

66 Aharoni, p.203.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

68 Kitchen, p. 68.

done and apparently plundered, being rebuilt afterwards in a very poor and temporary form. According to Aharoni the last town was concentrated mainly on the high Tell.<sup>69</sup> Here then the artifactual evidence further confirms the association of Barak with Stratum I of *Tell el-Qedah/Tell Waqqas*. Finally, it seems unlikely that the excavators missed the site in all seven squares excavated.

Against Aharoni's desperate argument, the writer makes these points: (1) it should come as no surprise that at this time Hazor had more than one king named Jabin for as Kitchen has illustrated there are many parallel examples of this situation from the period in question;<sup>70</sup> (2) it is astonishing that a Palestinian archaeologist should suppose that a tell would not be reoccupied after its total destruction for this very situation is attested over and over again in Palestinian archaeology; (3) Aharoni has committed the logical error of positing an unnecessary, novel hypothesis in place of an ancient, reliable, consistent account; (4) he handles a text verified over and over again as creditable by archaeological research in a most radical fashion; (5) finally, he commits the logical error of arguing in a circle when he says that the clear data attesting Israelite occupation during the late fourteenth century, such as the mention of (i-s-r [Asher]),<sup>71</sup> in a fragment of a stele from Seti I, "show a stage of occupation that preceded the conquest of the Canaanite districts." Aharoni in this discussion presumed the settlement occurred before the decisive battles in the North. Having posited this conclusion he interpreted the data according to his presupposition rather than according to the biblical statement. Finally, as incredible as it may seem, he appealed to this data to support his conclusion. A better method of procedure would have been to interpret the data according to the historical narrative rather than according to the conclusion he is seeking to establish.

### CONCLUSION

On the basis of the evidence mentioned above and without consciously suppressing other evidence two conclusions impose themselves: (1) there is no convincing support from the Palestinian artifactual evidence for a Conquest in the mid-thirteenth century. On the contrary, the artifactual evidence from Jericho and Hazor decisively

69 Aharoni, p. 207.

70 Kitchen, p. 68.

71 Aharoni, p. 168.

refutes the theory; (2) in every way studied in which the textual tradition regarding the Conquest and the Settlement can be tested by archaeology, the two lines of evidence coincide. Furthermore, all the accredited Palestinian artifactual evidence supports the literary account that the Conquest occurred at the time specifically dated by the biblical historians. Therefore, from this data one has no reason either to question the trustworthiness of the Bible regarding the date of the Exodus, or to use another method of interpretation for these numbers than the normal literary approach.

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