

# The Times of the Judges — The Archaeology: (a) Exodus to Conquest

DR. A.J.M. OSGOOD

## PRELIMINARY

This article, “The Times of the Judges — the Archaeology”, attempts to take the chronological framework arrived at in “The Times of the Judges — a Chronology”<sup>1</sup> and to evaluate the archaeological records against that framework. “(a) Exodus to Conquest” here attempts to show that present archaeological interpretation has failed to understand the record of the Israelite wandering and conquest.

This paper seeks to show that one period alone can fill the requirements, and that is the Middle Bronze I (Albright nomenclature) of Palestine, so forcing a radical revision of the presently accepted chronology of the ancient world in conformity with biblical statements.

As defined in “The Times of the Judges — a Chronology” the term “times of the Judges”, is here used to cover the whole period of 480 years mentioned in 1 Kings 6:1, that is, from the Exodus of Israel until the fourth year of Solomon’s reign.

Necessary to our discussion is the need to emphasise that the **science** of archaeology deals with artifacts found in the present. They are examined and analysed in the present. The reality of the situation is that science, which is based on “repeatable testing”, can only work in the present. **Interpretation** of the scientific evidence with regard to the past gives us the details of history; but our conclusions in this respect are only an interpretation. All conclusions about the past are interpretative and are, therefore, based on numerous assumptions about the artifactual material being examined.

## THE ACCEPTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL CHRONOLOGY

The presently held history and chronology of the Holy Land, that is, the accepted chronology, likewise

is an interpretation. It is based on assumptions, some of which are:

**1. It assumes a Paleolithic to Iron Age sequence**, that is, a developmental sequence of human evolution. It is evolutionary in basis, and therefore, by definition must occupy a long period.

The theory of organic evolution (or amoeba to man sequence) has become dogma in many scientific circles, increasingly since the publication of Darwin’s ‘Origin of Species’. In historical/archaeological publications, the stone age to iron age concept is completely based upon it. It is the primary and often unconscious, assumption in archaeological circles today. Yet it is contrary to a literal reading of the historical records of Scripture, which here is taken as the baseline for re-interpretation of the archaeological artifacts. The stone age to iron age theory is here not accepted as substantiated, yet as the labels are clearly tied to archaeological strata in the publications, they remain tags by which we can identify the association of these strata. By use of the labels in the following discussion however, it must be understood that these are used only to avoid literary confusion and not to imply any acceptance of evolutionary ideation behind those labels.

**2. It assumes correctness of the documentary hypothesis** concerning the origin of Bible manuscripts, that is, the J.E.D.P. theory. Thus it does not accept the inerrancy of Scripture or the Scriptures to be the revealed Word of God.

This documentary hypothesis, which came into prominence in the mid-nineteenth century, is the assumption that the early biblical narrative was gelled from various tribal laws and stories among the ‘precursors’ of the Israelites, later being brought together as part of their national literature.

This was supposed to have occurred from a collection of stories and legends called ‘J’ from the southern tribes about 900 B.C., which was brought together with a second document ‘E’ from the

northern tribes about 750 B.C., and gelled together by an editor about 650 B.C. with the addition of a document 'D'.

Additional material then being added including priestly document 'P', and an editor or redactor about 400 B.C. produced the final form. This theory, the J.E.D.P. theory, does not *prima facie* accept internal chronological statements or authorship from the Bible itself and so is in marked conflict with the literal reading of the Bible.

This unproven and unprovable theory is here not assumed. The baseline assumption of this paper being that the biblical documents are reasonable and literal history.

**3. It assumes a reasonably accurate, sequential assessment of Egyptian history** by the interpreters of the Egyptian priest, Manetho.

Manetho's claims concerning the history of Egypt cannot at this time be considered substantiated, yet the Egyptian historical sequence so arrived at is used as the prime rule or measure — the yardstick of ancient historical chronology. The author here begins not with the accepted Egyptian chronology, but with the biblical chronology as the measure for the ancient historical record and attempts to revise the accepted chronology against the Bible's documents.

**4. It assumes science's ability with modern dating methods to arrive at an objective age for the ancient world**, a position which must be disputed. Whatever the method, whether carbon-14 dating, paleomagnetism, tree-ring dating or even the written word, the scientific testing method can only work in the present, at the time of scientific testing or observation, and cannot return to the past to perform its function. Therefore all dating methods which attempt to evaluate the past are also based on inherent assumptions concerning the material, from the past, being tested, and therefore cannot be truly scientific or objective in their conclusion concerning the past. This has not been readily appreciated fully by the large majority of workers in this field.

When the question of the period under discussion, "the times of the Judges", is looked at against the accepted chronology, the following emerges:

The conquest of Canaan is seen as piecemeal and occurring, if at all, about 1,230 B.C., allowing only 230 years of elapsed time until David came to the throne in approximately 1,000 B.C. It is assumed that its history is a later document, edited from numerous "traditions".

Such an interpretation of the times of the Judges is the first place of disagreement chronologically with the creation — inerrancy position, which calls for the Conquest in 1406 B.C.

The 1230 B.C. position would be taken, for example, by John Bright in his book 'A History of Israel':<sup>2</sup>

*"But to describe how Israel came into being is not easy, and that chiefly because the biblical traditions, from which the bulk of our information comes, are, like the stories of the patriarchs, difficult to evaluate. Many view them with profoundest skepticism. To ignore the problem by merely rehearsing the biblical narrative, or to advance hypothetical reconstructions of the events, would be equally pointless."*<sup>2:105</sup> (emphasis mine)

Concerning the Exodus, he says:—

*"The Date of the Exodus. This question has occasioned much debate. But while no exact date can be set, we may be fairly sure that the exodus took place during the first three quarters, probably the first half, of the thirteenth century. The Bible, to be sure, explicitly states (1 Kings 6:1) that it was four hundred and eighty years from the exodus to the fourth year of Solomon (ca.958). This would apparently place the exodus in the fifteenth century, and would thus seem to support the view that the conquest took place in the Amarna period. But this view has now been almost universally abandoned, chiefly because it contradicts archaeological evidence bearing on the conquest which will be mentioned later."*<sup>2</sup>

Such a view is critical of the biblical documents, and their authority so claimed, and stems from the basic assumption that the archaeological artifacts and chronology presently held have given us an **absolute basis** from which to work. Such a view is untenable, but John Bright's position represents a main-stream position in present-day Western archaeological and theological circles, and is firmly based on the acceptance of the documentary hypothesis as being sound and justified philosophically. Such has never been verified, and cannot by its very nature be verified.

In this paper the Scriptures are, in fact, taken as literal and valid history for the purpose of evaluation of the history of the ancient world.

## A DIFFERENT STARTING POINT NEEDED

When Scripture is placed against the **accepted chronology** the conquest of Canaan by Israel is placed at the end of the Late Bronze (LB) age in Canaan (see Figure 1).

The conquest narrative of Scripture is poorly illustrated archaeologically by this period, but this time slot in the archaeological evidence has been very solidly agreed upon as the likely time of the conquest (by those who accept that there was a conquest in the first place). On the other hand, rigid

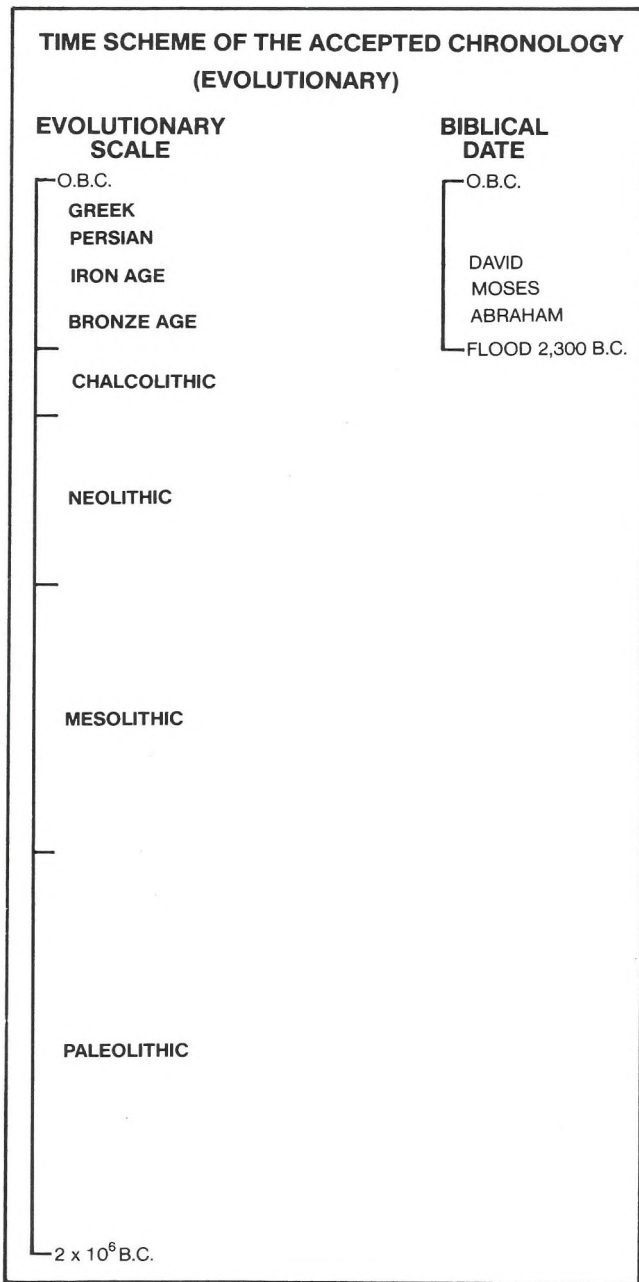


Figure 1. Time scheme of the accepted evolutionary chronology.

adherence to the accepted chronology inhibits a willingness for the adherents to look at any other age to fulfil the necessary conditions.

**Conditions Needed Archaeologically for the Biblical Historical Narrative**

When identifying the period of Israelite wanderings and conquest, and the times of the Judges, the following general conditions must be met to uphold the biblical narrative:

1. A nomadic culture evidently in Sinai and Negev, with evidence of correspondence in northern

- Egypt.
2. A suitable culture embracing all the area mentioned in the Bible and nowhere else (in Trans-Jordan and Palestine).
3. Evidence of a new invasive culture conquering the old and continuing at least until late Assyrian times.
4. Evidence of an end to the previous civilization, corresponding geographically exactly with biblical statements.
5. A weak Egypt during the times here called “the times of the Judges”.

**A NEW ASSESSMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

A new assessment of the archaeological artifacts against the Bible as the starting document is, therefore, needed and here attempted. My assumptions are simple, namely:

1. The Bible is a reasonable and correct historical document.
2. The biblical chronology, which is complete and unbroken, is the measure of world history B.C.

**A NEW SCALE NEEDED**

In order to reassess the position of the Exodus-Conquest, a new archaeological table is needed. I will, therefore, place the **archaeological stratigraphy side by side with the Bible chronology** in order to arrive at such a table.

**The Table of Archaeological Stratigraphy**

The area chosen is Palestine, the scene of these events. The city chosen should have a long history from earliest times of human civilization to at least a datable and reasonably acceptable time period. Here, for the latter, the Hellenistic period is taken, approximately beginning 300 B.C. The city chosen should give witness to the whole of Palestine’s history, and should have no occupational gaps. Such a city does not exist, but a close approximation can be made by taking a composite of two cities which will give close to the same result.

The cities chosen here are Jericho and Hazor. See Fig. 2. The two combined appear to satisfy the criteria. These two cities maximize the number of strata available for study and show evidence of continuous occupation at their appropriate respective times. They overlap significantly at the end of Early Bronze III.

**Jericho** — has cultural levels from Natufian or

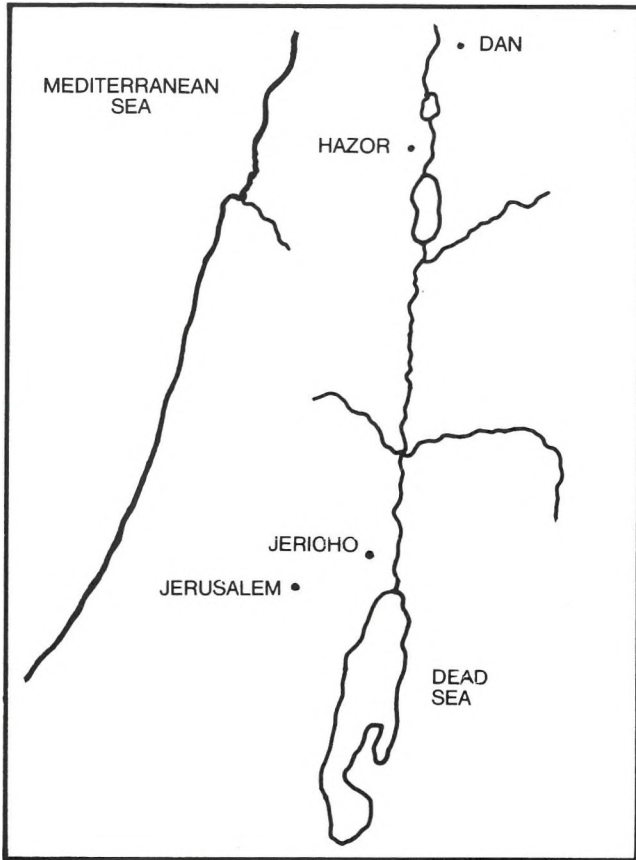


Figure 2. Location map for Jericho and Hazor

“Mesolithic” times until Iron II. Thus between virgin rock and the end of Early Bronze III (EB III) there are thirteen cultural levels. Jericho is “heavy” with Neolithic levels.

**Hazor** — from end EB III that is beginning with the level XIX, to beginning of Hellenistic period equals seventeen cultural levels. Hazor is “heavy” with Iron Age levels.

In other words, in these respective parts of the stratification of these two cities, there appears to have been a greater than average number of levels, so this will obviously influence the ultimate result of the archaeological table.

Some allowance must also be made for “Paleolithic”, but this is an area of gigantic assumptions and cannot be specifically dealt with here.

When we attempt to make this composite of the two cities with the overlap point at the end of Early Bronze III (EB III) we get the result as shown in Figure 3. The biblical data allows nineteen hundred years for this period from Babel (approximately one hundred years after the Flood at 2,302 B.C.) to Alexander the Great, that is, nineteen hundred years of elapsed time from 2,200 B.C. to 300 B.C. approximately. This then is the yardstick for the archaeological stratigraphy. The biblical implication

is that all the available surface artifacts of the archaeologist must represent a post-Flood time period, and in most cases, a post-Babel time period. The table thus shown in Figure 3, with the archaeological levels on the left side and the biblically claimed elapsed time on the right, now serves as a rough but reasonable guide of **approximate** periods which can be scanned for the archaeological evidence of the historical narratives.

Approximations for the sake of investigation can now be “read off” as follows:

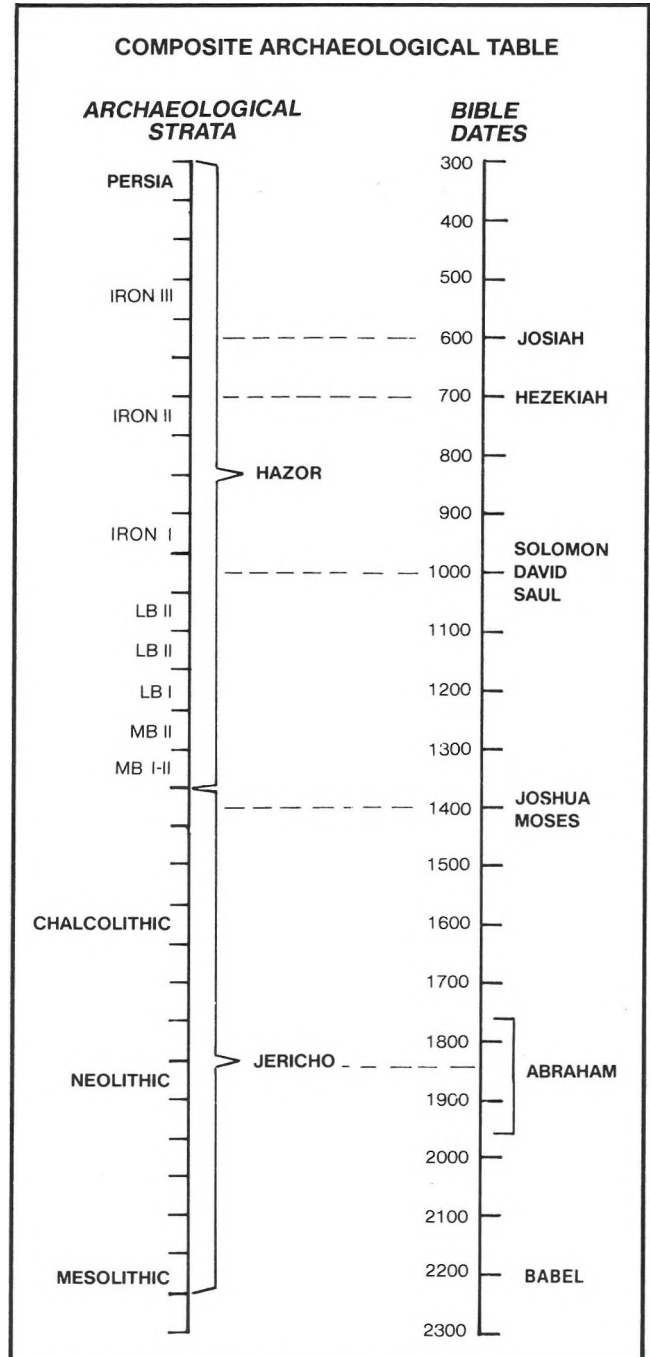


Figure 3. Composite Archaeological Table.

**Abraham** fits approximately from the Neolithic to the Chalcolithic period not Middle Bronze I (MB I) as presently held.

**Moses and Joshua** fit approximately at the end of the Early Bronze III (EB III) not at the end of the Late Bronze Age as presently held.

**Solomon** — Late Bronze to Iron I, not the end of Iron I as presently supposed.

Relevant to our discussion here, namely the life-time of Joshua, the period of Israel's conquest is the earliest part of this period here called "the times of the Judges". The table shown in Figure 3 allows us to place this somewhere near the end of EB III or the beginning of MB I. **Therefore, we will now look for evidence of Israel's wanderings at the end of EB III or during Middle Bronze I.**

First, however, I will list the reasons why Palestinian Late Bronze — Iron I is not a suitable identifying point for these events.

1. It is well off scale on the table in Figure 3, and therefore, must raise doubts.
2. The end of LB II does not witness the type of massive destruction in Palestine consistent with the biblical geographic claims that the invasion story suggests.
3. No significantly new people appeared at this period in Palestine.
4. There is no satisfactory evidence of nomadic culture of this period in northern and north-east Sinai (Wilderness of Zin).
5. There was a strong Egypt during the Late Bronze age and there was no total eclipse of her culture during Iron I as needed against the biblical testimony.

The end of Early Bronze III alone in Palestine, as I will show, gives the destruction picture needed. Middle Bronze I alone gives the nomadic and conquest characteristics necessary for the invading Israelites and the continuing culture to the end of Iron II.

As Amiram states

*"In the discussion pertaining to the transition from the Early Bronze period to the Middle Bronze, we have emphasised the sharp cultural break between these two worlds. From the MB I onwards, the development of the material culture (to judge by its reflection in the pottery) is continuous, gradual, and evolutionary to the end of the Iron Age, or even later."*<sup>3</sup> (emphasis ours)

## THE MIDDLE BRONZE I PERIOD AS THE PERIOD OF THE EXODUS AND CONQUEST AND THE SETTLING OF CANAAN

### Terminology

Legion have been the terms used to classify this period, itself a witness of poor understanding of the archaeological finds. Some have used one label for the time, while others have divided it into two periods, but as I will, show because of failure to come to terms with the biblical chronology there has been utter failure to adequately label this period or to understand its true historicity.

Among the schemes are the following:

Kenyon (1951–56–60) — Intermediate Early Bronze — Middle Bronze (EB-MB)

Tufnell 1958 — EB IV — Calciform.

Kochavi (1967–69) — Intermediate Bronze.

Amiram (1960) — Middle Bronze I (MB I).

Albright (1965) — EB IIIC — EB IV — MB I.

Tapp (1970) — EB IV — MB I.

Oren (1971) — EB IVA — EB IVB.

Dever (1973) — EB IVA — EB IVB — EB IVC

**We shall use here three terms and propose their application: –**

- (a) Early Bronze III for the preceding period,
- (b) Early Bronze IV, and
- (c) Middle Bronze I for the period under discussion.

### Hypothesis

It is now my contention that:

- (a) Early Bronze III represents the Canaanite culture in Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the preceding period.
- (b) Early Bronze IV in Trans Jordan represents a Moabite culture, thus showing difference from the surrounding Canaanite EB III culture.
- (c) Middle Bronze I is the Israelite culture superseding Early Bronze III and contemporary for the most part with Moabite EB IV culture.

### The Historical and Geographical Model

On the accepted chronology, the Middle Bronze I period has been generally accepted as the time of Abraham's life for the following reasons:

1. The accepted chronology allows the biblical date of Abraham to be slotted in here on that framework.
2. It appears to have been a nomadic period, and Abraham generally is thought by these proponents to have lived in such a culture.

However, no positive evidence has ever been presented in order to unequivocally show that MB I



can be related to Abraham's life time historically, and very large questions must be raised. For example —

1. Why was there a preceding brilliant Early Bronze civilization contrary to biblical expectations?
2. Where is any evidence of events during Abraham's life time, e.g. the battle of Mesopotamian kings against those of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 14)?
3. Who in fact were the MB I people?
4. Why does the Bible allow only 350 years between the Flood and Abraham when the archaeological evidence up to MB I would indicate much longer?

I will endeavour to show that the biblical narrative which fits MB I culture and fits it exactly is that concerning the Exodus and Conquest of Palestine by the nomadic Israelites, and that the EB III culture preceding it was in fact the Canaanite culture at the time of Moses and Joshua. Furthermore, the EB IV in Trans Jordan represents Moabite culture, while the EB IV in Palestine, namely, along the Megiddo-Beth Shean line, is a syncretic culture of mixed Israelite/Canaanite traits in the very regions where Israel and unconquered Canaanite cities were found, and therefore was succeeded in time by the Palestinian MB I (Judges 1).

### CHARACTERISTICS OF MB I

Middle Bronze I was primarily a nomadic culture between two settled cultures. This point seemed to bring some weight of unanimity earlier but is being disputed much today for complex reasons, and is now the subject of new theories embracing both nomadic parts and sedentary parts, a theory which itself does little to clear up the historical enigma of this archaeological culture. Kenyon strongly states this nomadic character in a discussion on Jericho: —

*“In one area seventeen successive stages in the town walls can be identified. The seventeenth was violently destroyed by fire and its destruction marks the end of the Early Bronze Age town, probably ca.2300 B.C. The catastrophe was the work of nomadic invaders who can be identified as the Amorites, and the succeeding period can best be described as Intermediate Early Bronze — Middle Bronze. The newcomers for long only camped on the site, and when they ultimately built houses, they were of flimsy construction. They never built a town wall.”*<sup>4</sup>

Kenyon's identification of the invaders as the Amorites is speculative and is here disputed. Indeed, this claim has fallen into some disrepute of late.

However, we wish to put forward a new model based on the evidence to be presented.

Ruth Amiram comments:

*“We have refrained in this discussion from dealing with the most intriguing problem of the MB I culture in Palestine, namely its nomadic character usually connected with the Amorites.”*<sup>5</sup> (Emphasis ours)

Albright also comments:

*“The settlements were clearly seasonal, since the only time of the year in which such arid districts could provide enough water for beasts, men and growing crops is during the months December — May (preferably January — April). Here people lived in round stone huts of “beehive” type, terraced small valleys and suitable hillsides, utilizing flash floods (suyul) to irrigate specially prepared fields. After the harvest, they probably did not remain long, since. . .”*<sup>6</sup>

To be sure, the nomadic nature of this has been challenged, (e.g. Cohen and Dever<sup>7:42</sup> but the belief still stands as Amiram has said:

*“This theory has long been contested, but much more stratigraphical evidence is required than is available at present for any significant advance towards its verification.”*<sup>5</sup>

Sadly, the biblical model of Israel's wandering and conquest has not been consulted, yet it provides the logical answer, viz. a people nomadic for a period, yet stationary in Sinai and the Negev for periods of up to a year at least, at any one spot, but journeying for ultimate conquest, encampment and settlement.

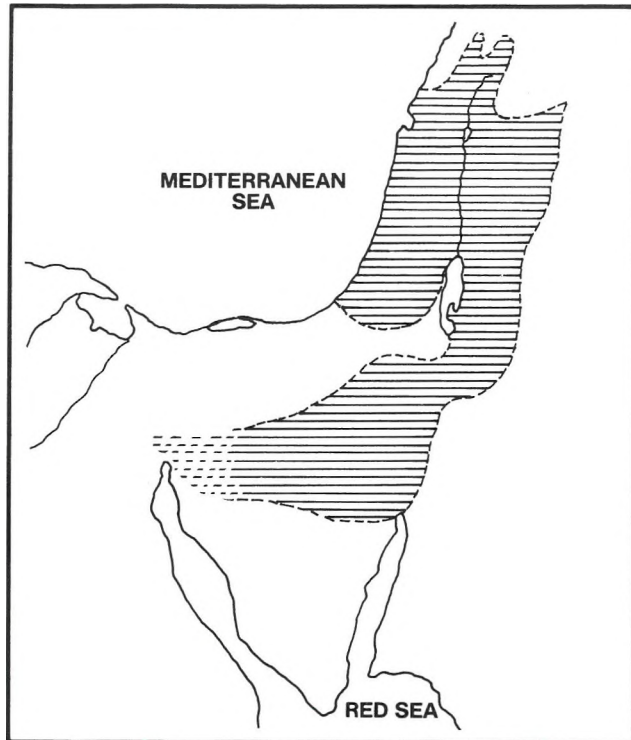
This model, which is the logical model fitting the facts, will continue not to be consulted so long as the present stubborn resistance to biblical historicity remains, and so the argument over the MB I culture will continue.

### The Distribution of MB I

The distribution of MB I culture (here used as a term to include all that was once referred to as MB I, namely EB IV to MB I) occupies geographically exactly the area that the ancient nation of Israel conquered, plus the area of ancient Moab, plus the area of the Sinai and the Negev consistent with the wandering of the Children of Israel (see Figure 4 and compare it with Figures 5 and 6).

The MB I people (including EB IV) occupied only that area mentioned above (see Prag<sup>8:70-80</sup>), but a modification must be made to the distribution characteristics as suggested by Rudolf Cohen,<sup>9</sup> who has shown that there was a definite geographical gap between the MB I culture in the Negev and the MB I culture in southern Judah. This is totally consistent with the biblical model of Israel's

wanderings.



**Figure 4.** Distribution of EB-MBA (equivalent to MB I) (After Prag<sup>8</sup>, with modification.)

### The Artifacts

MB I culture was a pottery culture. It was also a metal-making culture, as witnessed by the copper pins, copper ingots and copper daggers that have been found. It was a culture that used mortars and pestles of one sort or another.<sup>10</sup> It was a culture that had contact with Egypt.<sup>7</sup> It was a culture that did build some temporary stone structures, as witnessed by the beehive shaped stone rings in the Sinai. It also appears to have been a culture that lacked icons and tomb offerings.<sup>11</sup> All this is consistent with ancient Israel.

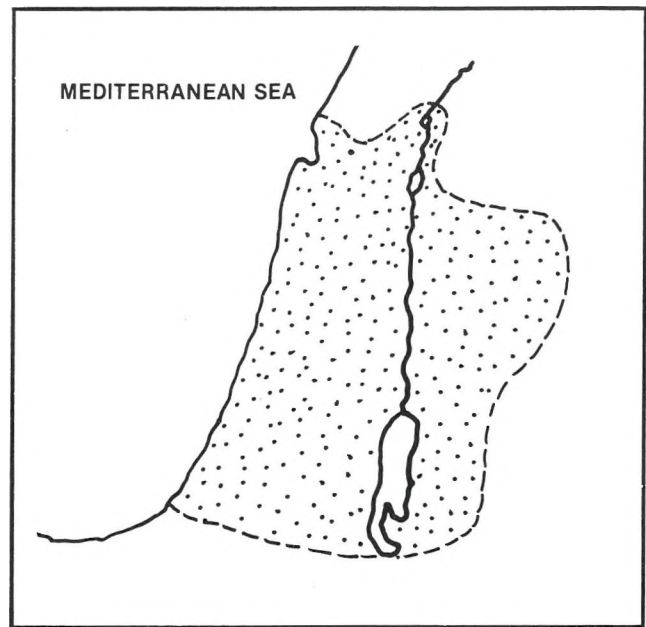
### An Invasive Culture

From the moment of its discovery, the MB I people have been accepted as an invasive people. This has come under some criticism of recent years, but the largest weight of evidence holds true to the suggestion that they were an invasive people.

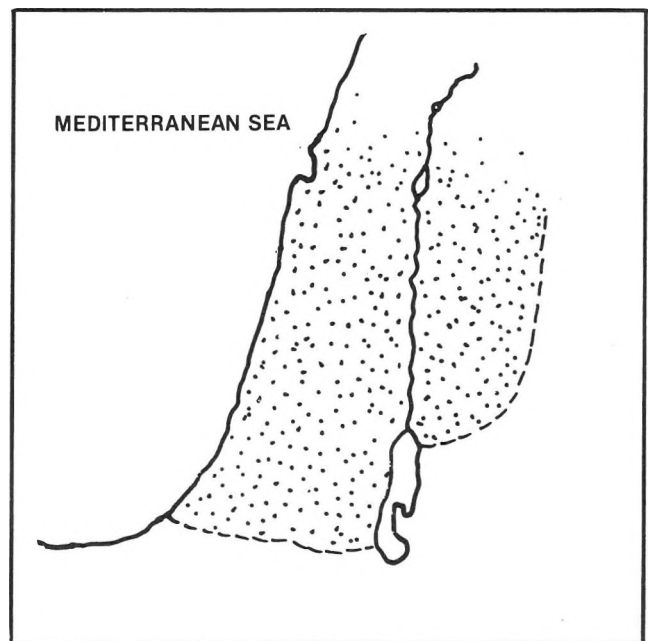
### A New People

Amiram<sup>3:191</sup> emphasises both the cultural break between MB I and the previous culture, and the on-going development from there until the end of Iron II at least. Again this has come under some attack in recent years, but the evidence of a new culture is strong.

The above characteristics are all consistent with



**Figure 5.** Distribution of EBA III. (Modified after Prag<sup>8</sup>.)



**Figure 6.** Distribution of MBA IIA. (Modified after Prag<sup>8</sup>.)

the biblical picture of the nation of Israel in its wanderings in the wilderness and its subsequent conquest of Palestine.

It is to be emphasised that the geographical distribution of the preceding age, the Early Bronze Age III, and the distribution of the following age, the Middle Bronze Age II, was more limited than that of the MB I, the main difference being that of the Sinai and the Negev areas, precisely the areas where Israel spent forty years wandering prior to the invasion of the land (compare Figures 5 and 6 again with Figure 4).

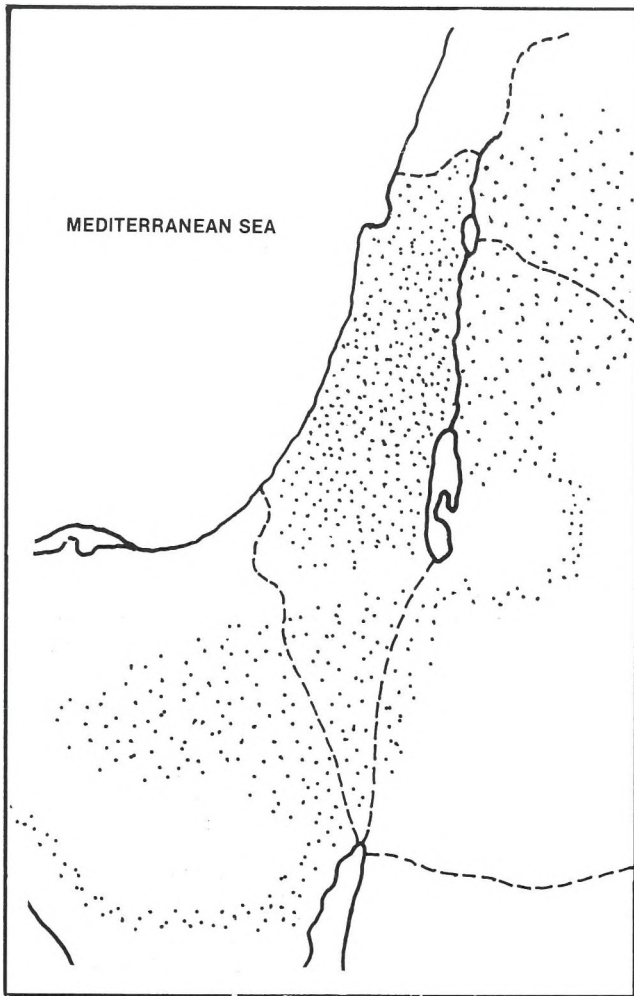


Figure 7. Expected MB I sites according to Exodus narrative.

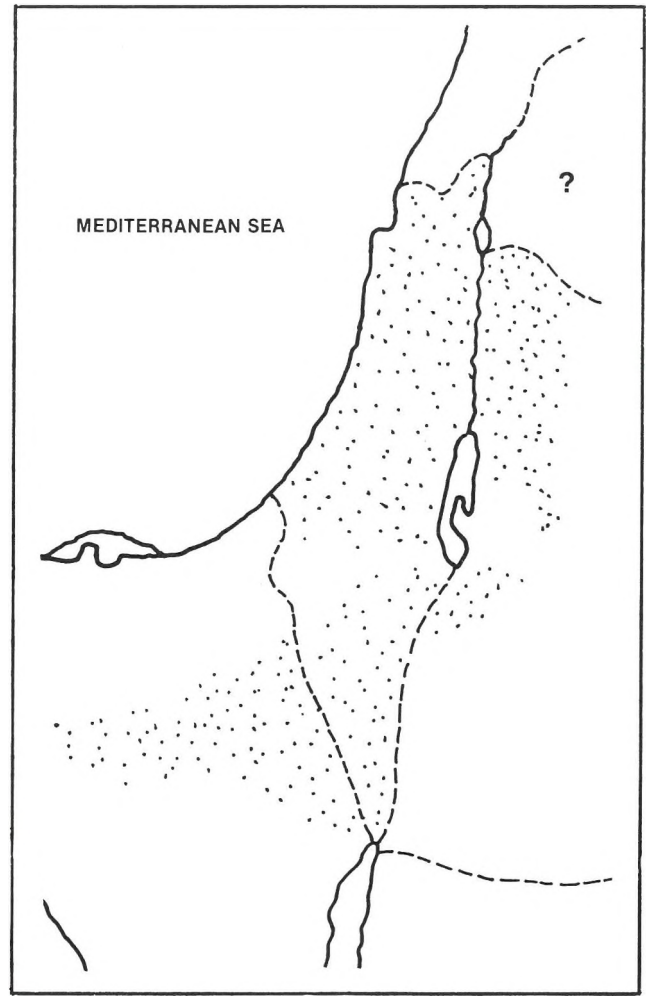


Figure 8. Actual findings of MB I (EB-MBA). (Sources — references 10, 12–22.)

## GEOGRAPHICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF EB IV-MB I CULTURE

### Region 1 — Sinai and the Negev

Figure 7 is a map of the distribution of known archaeological sites in the Sinai and the Negev, while for comparison, Figure 8 is a map of the expected distribution of artifacts if the MB I culture was in fact Israel.

### The Biblical Model of the Wilderness Wanderings

Israel was in the wilderness of Sinai and the Negev for a total period of forty years. The territory they wandered in appears to have included, as far as we can reckon, a large area of the Sinai, mostly the northern part (Deuteronomy 2:1) or what is known as the Wilderness of Zin, and the southern Negev as far as the Wadi Arabah (estimated). A generation of people wasted in the wilderness and were buried there in substantial numbers. They originally came across the Red Sea. They eventually left through the

Wadi Arabah into the mountains of Edom (Exodus and Numbers).

The MB I culture in Sinai and the Negev primarily corresponds to the distribution we would expect for the Israelites. However, there is one area missing, viz. Southern Sinai. This could be explained by

- (a) a wrong identification of the Exodus route,
- (b) a lack of excavation there, and
- (c) a decline in pottery-making activities while at Mt. Sinai (?Jebel Musa), due to local conditions.

Certainly all sites that have been found are satisfactorily explained by the biblical model. The culture appears to be nomadic and a one stratum type culture. A typical example of the culture was excavated by Cohen and Dever in the 'central Negev Highlands project', a joint American/Israeli excavation, at Nahal Nissana.

During this excavation a number of structures which were suggested as dwelling places, but may



well have been animal compounds for protection at night of the type that could be built by a single family in the course of a day, were excavated. These were not inconsistent with a nomadic tent-dwelling people and appear to be one level dwellings. MB I pottery accompanied these findings and an occasional EB IV sherd was found. This, however, is not inconsistent with a one level dwelling as will be pointed out when we discuss EB IV. The dwellings were abandoned and not destroyed so there is no tangible evidence for an enemy attack,<sup>11:63</sup> although Glueck originally proposed one.<sup>15:20</sup>

The reason why the people inhabited this area is a mystery to those who do not adopt the biblical model.

*“The question of why marginal semi-arid regions were apparently preferred over the more temperate zones in Central Palestine in MB I is still an enigma.”<sup>7:57</sup>*

And again:

*“The fundamental questions of why the sites were located and how their economies were supported in such a remote and hostile region cannot yet be fully answered.”<sup>7:57</sup>*

The MB I culture in the Negev did not go north of the Yeruham or Dimona Hills of the central Negev. This is shown by Rudolph Cohen:

*“The sequence of settlement at Tel Esdar differs from that of the sites of the Central Negev; whereas in the latter the MB I remains appear directly above those of the EB II, at Tel Esdar there is a gap between the EB II remains and those of the Iron Age. This strikingly parallels the sequence discovered at Tel Arad, where the same gap appears between the EB II fortified city and the Iron Age fortress. This seems to indicate that the wave of settlement in the MB I did not extend beyond the Central Negev hills of Yeruham and Dimona into the Valley of Beersheva.”<sup>9</sup> (emphasis ours)*

The Israelites waited in Kadesh Barnea and failed to enter the Promised Land of Canaan from the south. Forty years later they were to enter from the east.

It has been assumed that the MB I people on entering Canaan came from the north, from the Assyrian direction. However, this absence of MB I artifacts in the northern Negev highly suggests that the hypothesis has a flaw in it, and the suggestion that they came in fact from the south and eventually from Egypt according to the biblical model is more consistent with the evidence here presented.

#### Region 2 — The Journey from the Negev to the River Arnon

The biblical description is found in Numbers chapters 20–21,32–33.

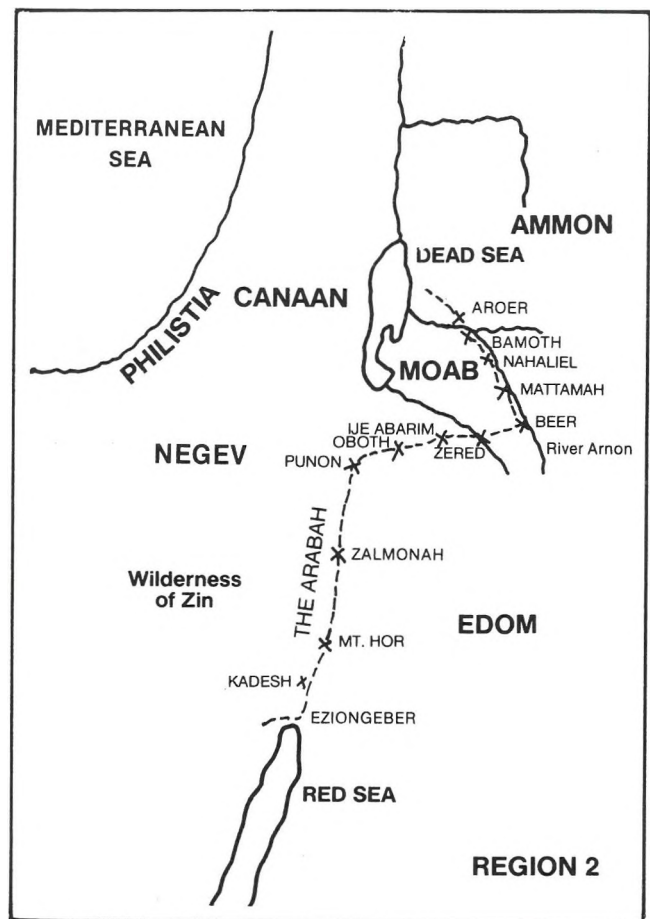


Figure 9. Map showing the journey from the Negev to the River Arnon.

#### 1. The Arabah — from Eziongeber to Mt Hor (see Figure 9)

From Mount Hor where Aaron died (Numbers 20:29, 21:4) they journeyed north to Zalmomah then Punon (now Feinon) in the northern part of the Arabah.

#### 2. Between Edom and Southern Moab

They then crossed from the Arabah to the Wadi el Hasa (equals Brook or Valley of Zared — Numbers 21:22), via

- (a) Oboth
- (b) Ije-abarim, and
- (c) The Valley of Zared,

their three stops on the southern border of Moab.

**3. They then crossed northward into the Wadi valley of the southern tributary of the Arnon and followed that to the Arnon itself.** That is, following their route on Figure 9, they travelled to:

- (a) the other side of Arnon (equals south-east branch) (“Brooks of Arnon”, Numbers 21:13),

- (b) Beer in wilderness verse 6–18,
- (c) Mattamah,
- (d) Nahaliel, and
- (e) Bamoth in the Wadi (verse 20).

Feinon has MB I remains, one of the few in the Arabah.<sup>18,24</sup> This is biblical Punon. Eastward from Feinon approximately a day's journey on foot up in the mountains brings us to MacDonald's site 23 known as Mashmil,<sup>25</sup> a lone and large MB I site, although some would say it is an EB IV site. Nonetheless it remains serious potential candidate for Oboth on both ceramic and geographical evidence.

If we continue in the same direction (eastward) approximately two day's journey, we come to the valley of Wadi el Hasa, which is the third stop mentioned on the southern border of Moab — the valley of Zared. It was here that the Children of Israel turned north to meet the southern branch of the Wadi Mujib (the southern branch of the Arnon River). There in the southernmost part of this valley, a day's journey from the Wadi el Hasa, we should be identifying Beer in the Wilderness. Beer, of course, means "a well", and the region where this potentially lies is adequately described by the term "Beer in the Wilderness". It was here that Israel dug for water at God's instruction (Number 21:16–18). Water is still obtainable today in this area, as Glueck has described:

*"Water is still obtainable by digging shallow pits in the dry bed of the Wadi."*<sup>18:176</sup>

Two more sites were used by Israel before they reached the main stream of the Arnon, and those sites were Mattanah and Nahaliel. These will naturally lie somewhere downstream or northward of Beer along the southern tributary of the Wadi Mujib.

Glueck mentions at least one site along this area which shows evidence of MB I occupation:

*"However, as we have already reported, we did find some surface Middle Bronze II sherds at el-Misna', whose history goes back to Early Bronze I and at el-Medeiyineh above Lejjun, whose history extends from Early Bronze I through Middle Bronze I."*<sup>18:152</sup>

The last stop on Israel's journey around Moab, before they reached the area in Trans Jordan which was later to become their land, was in fact Bamoth (Numbers 21:20). The valley or Wadi mentioned is of course the main stream of the Arnon River. Just close to this is the ancient city of Aroer which is represented today by the ruins of Arair, and in this area Middle Bronze I artifacts have been found.

*"Also at Arair, whose pottery gleaned from the surface extends from Early Bronze I through Early Bronze IV — Middle Bronze I ..."*<sup>18:153</sup>

The area around the border of Moab involved in Israel's wandering is still somewhat in limbo as this area has not been subjected to a huge amount of archaeological excavation. But there is sufficient testimony to show that the culture of the MB I people is represented, although some influence from EB IV (which I am here equating with Moabite culture) is to be admitted. This, however, is not totally surprising.

### Region 3 — The EB IV — MB I People of Trans Jordan: A Cultural Smorgasbord

Trans Jordan becomes a snare for archaeological interpretation since I believe any attempt to interpret the archaeology of EB IV — MB I in Trans Jordan is doomed to failure in ultimate analysis unless one takes cognisance of the biblical narrative of the Exodus and Conquest.

### Historical Framework

Numbers 21 fills in some fascinating history about Trans Jordan. The following facts emerge, from the north downwards (see Figure 10):

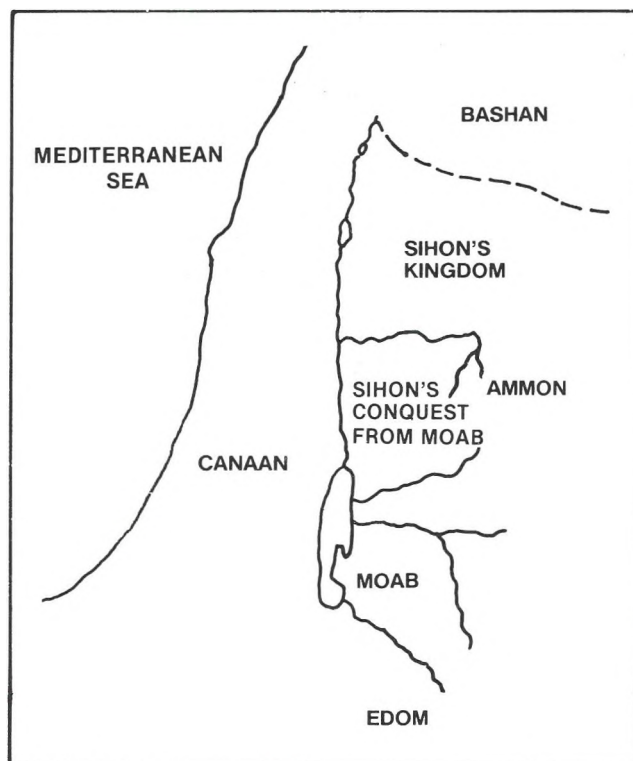


Figure 10. Map showing the territories of Bashan, Sihon and Moab. (See also Fig. 11).

1. The Amorite king, Og, ruled in Bashan in the far north.
2. It appears that the original kingdom of Sihon, the Amorite, was just north of the Wadi Zerqa, known in the Bible as the River Jabbok (Numbers

- 21:24).
3. It appears originally that the former king of Moab had ruled the area south of the River Jabbok, right down to the Wadi el Hasa (Wadi Zared).
  4. Prior to Israel's conquest of this area, Sihon had conquered the area between the River Jabbok and the Arnon River from the former king of Moab. It appears, importantly for our discussion, that he did not totally drive out the Moabites from this area but they served him (Numbers 21:29, where captivity is mentioned).
  5. In the days of Israel's conquest, Moab under Balak, king of Moab, was the territory between the Wadi el Hasa and Wadi Mujib (Arnon).

The conquest by Israel of Trans Jordan extended from the Wadi Mujib right up north to include all the area of Bashan — in other words, all the area of Sihon and all the area of Og, king of Bashan. It explicitly did not include the main area of Moab, south of the Wadi Mujib (see Figure 10 again).

These facts will give us the following guide archaeologically (see Figure 11):

OG'S TERRITORY	SIHON'S TERRITORY	SIHON'S MOABITE CONQUEST	MOAB
Israelite	Israelite	3 Phases Israelite	Steady Development of Moabite Culture
Amorite (Og)	Amorite (Sihon)	Sihon's Moabite Captivity	
		Moab	

TRANS JORDAN FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

**Figure 11.** Table comparing the parallel development of Moabite and Amorite cultures, and Israelite conquest west of the Jordan River.

1. The northern kingdom of Bashan should show evidence of Amorite civilization, here equated with EB III, which was ended by the MB I peoples, here called Israel.
2. The area of Gilead north of the Jabbok River but south of Bashan should have exactly the same pattern as that of Bashan EB III superseded by MB I civilization, when Israel settled.
3. The area between the Wadi Mijib (Arnon) and the Wadi Jabbok will show evidence of three phases, the lower phase representing Moabite culture, here defined as EB IV, a second layer representing Sihon's civilization holding

Moabites captive, here it will continue to be EB IV, and then a third culture representing the Israelite conquerors (MB I).

4. In Moab south of Wadi Mujib we will meet with an EB IV culture which has arisen from a previous EB III culture, and which will continue on in that vein without explicit conquest by the MB I people.

This pattern (see Figure 11 again) is, in fact, exactly what we find from the archaeological reports presently at hand.

EB IV in Trans Jordan is, in fact, defined most clearly in the area of ancient Moab. It will, however, include a portion which was occupied by the group known as the Midianites mentioned in Number chapter 31. The area where these Midianites lived can logically be identified if one bears in mind that the Midianites were associated geographically with the Moabites, and close to Israel's encampment north of Moab in such a way that the social intercourse with the Midianite women at Beth-Peor could occur. And if one bears in mind that when Moses lived in the northern Sinai-Negev region during his forty years of exile from Egypt, he came in contact with this Midianite group and married one of their women. Then clearly the only geographical spot where these Midianites could have lived is in the western portion of Moab, east of the Dead Sea, and perhaps at its southern end (see Figure 12). It is just there that the cities of Bab Ed-Dhra, Numeira, etc. have been excavated, all of which show signs of destruction at the end of EB III and subsequent poor repopulation by the EB IV people (here defined as Moabites).

These cities, five in all, have been suggested as possible candidates for Sodom and Gomorrah, the five cities of the plain. However, the narrative of Numbers 31, Moses' attack on the Midianite cities, fits the details better, particularly when one views the nature of the destruction at these cities. It was not the type of geological destruction that the narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah would suggest, but far closer to that which would be wrought by human agency.

The area between the Jabbok and the Wadi Mujib is the most interesting of these areas, especially as a number of sites have been excavated in this area providing consistent results, particularly at the sites of Iktanu and Tel Iskander.

Prag,<sup>8:77</sup> while discussing Tel Iktanu, points to two phases, both particularly emphasising red coloured ceramics, essentially of an EB IV phase with similarities to the Moabite area EB IV, and also states <sup>8:79</sup> that these red slipped or burnished pottery of Iktanu phase 1 and southern type are not to be found in the areas north of the Wadi Zerqa (Jabbok).

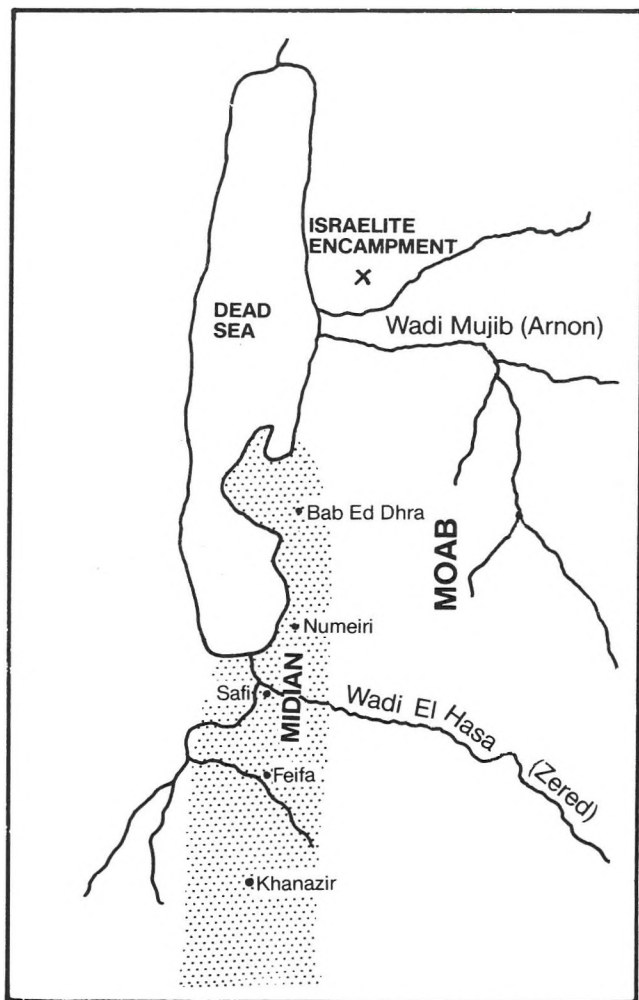


Figure 12. Map showing the location of possible Midianite settlement.

She saw the Jabbok as a border area, so that what in essence is occurring in this part of Trans Jordan is two phases of what might be called EB IV followed then by MB I, often built on different sites. Now this corresponds exceedingly well with the phases suggested for this area (see Figure 11 again), which was conquered from the former king of Moab by Sihon and then reconquered from Sihon by Israel.

Down in the south, however, the red burnished wares continue on through all phases:

*“The essential point of interest for all these southern sites is that red slipped and burnished wares continued right through the pottery of early and late phases, though there does seem to be an increase in plain and non-red slip wares towards the end of the period at the expense of the red wares.”*<sup>8:78</sup>

However, north of the Jabbok or the Wadi Zerqa, we meet the situation where Middle Bronze I sites are often built straight on sites that previously had to have Early Bronze III habitation, the Early Bronze IV

of the south now being absent.

*“They indicate that in the region north of the Zerqa River in Trans Jordan, significant proportion of EB-MB sites (approximately half) were founded on the same position as a previous EB III or EB II settlement.”*<sup>8:74</sup>

EB-MB in this discussion is the same as MB I. It is Kathleen Kenyon’s terminology.

The sites in the north consistently show the evidence of destruction at the end of EB III wherever excavations have occurred, and a supplanting by the MB I people, a picture that is thoroughly consistent with the biblical narrative of the Exodus and Conquest. This, however, identifies EB IV Trans Jordan pottery culture as Moabite (and also possibly Ammonite). The MB I people of Trans Jordan were the Israelites, who conquered the area of the former Amorites and settled instead in their place.

From this Trans Jordan area under Moses, the Children of Israel next thrust across the Jordan River into Palestine under Joshua after the Reubenites, Gadites and the tribe of Manasseh had built cities and shelters for their families and their cattle (Numbers 32). The evidence of a relationship between the Trans Jordan MB I people and the Palestinian MB I has been obvious to several. Prag reports:

*“This raises the interesting point that settlement on the open Valley floor as in the Chalcolithic, EB-MB, parts of the Iron Age, etc. may indicate a degree of unity, cultural or political on both sides of the Jordan, while a retreat to defensive positions as in the EBA and the rest of the Iron Age may indicate periods when the Jordan River was a political frontier between the hostile groups. It might be inferred therefore that Palestine and Transjordan belong to one political unit in the EB-MB period and that there were no difficulties in passing the Jordan fords.”*<sup>8:76</sup> (emphasis mine)

This is completely consistent with the biblical narrative, and the revised chronology here presented allows the biblical narrative to find its true place against the archaeological artifacts.

Dever notes not only a cultural unity between the two, but also presupposes that the Trans Jordan people preceded the conquest of Palestine, an incredibly ironic statement in view of the fact that the Bible’s narrative of Israel’s conquest was not consulted for this.

*“The EB IV/MB I transitional phase in Transjordan was brief and rapidly gave way to a culture which expanded vigorously, chiefly into Palestine, where its fully developed expression is seen in the numerous sedentary and semi-sedentary MB I sites of southern Palestine. Elsewhere I have attempted to document this expansion and to*



*distinguish geographical and cultural 'Families' in MB I.*"<sup>26</sup>

It is most ironic that Dever can take this view and still not consult the Israelite conquest narrative, which is certainly the only written illustration of a culture that behaved in this manner in that part of the world.

The next act of the Children of Israel prior to the Conquest across the Jordan River was the destruction of the Midianite enclave, apparently on the western side of Moab. This is narrated in Numbers chapter 31 and I believe illustrated archaeologically by the five cities in the southern Ghor of the Dead Sea.

These five cities are known today as Bab edh-Dhra, Numeira, es-Safi, Feifeh and Khanazir (see Figure 12 again).

*"All the sites discovered or visited by Rast and Schaub belong to the Early Bronze Age (3150–2200 B.C.). Even more interesting is the fact that all of them came to an end in virtually the same period: Bab edh-Dhra<sup>c</sup> — from EB I to late EB III/beginning of EB IV.*

*Numeira — EB III*

*es-Safi — EB I to EB III*

*Feifeh — EB I to EB III*

*Khanazir — EB III to EB IV*

*Thus three of these cities existed from EB I to the end of EB III/beginning of EB IV. The other two were founded during EB III and came to their end at the end of EB III/beginning of EB IV.*

*The Rast and Schaub survey also focuses our attention on the similarity in location and layout of these five cities. Moreover, at least three of these cities were destroyed by fire.*"<sup>27</sup>

These five cities are cited as possible candidates for Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Bela by reference to the accepted chronology. However, their destruction was the type that man would create and not the fiery geological catastrophe that Genesis speaks of in reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. This is thus consistent with these five cities being the Midianite cities of Numbers 31.

#### Region 4 — The Conquest of Palestine

The MB I people of Palestine were a new people, a new civilization, and a new culture. Some have disputed this, but the evidence remains strong. For example, Kathleen Kenyon says:

*"The final end of the Early Bronze Age civilization came with catastrophic completeness. The last of the Early Bronze Age walls of Jericho was built in a great hurry using old and broken bricks and was probably not completed when it was destroyed by fire. Little or none of the town inside the walls has survived denudation, but it was probably completely destroyed, for all the finds show that there was an*

*absolute break, and that a new people took the place of the earlier inhabitants. Every town in Palestine that has so far been investigated shows the same break. The newcomers were nomads, not interested in town life and they so completely drove out or absorbed the old population perhaps already weakened and decadent that all traces of the Early Bronze civilization disappeared."*<sup>28</sup> (emphasis ours)

Ruth Amiram also presses very hard the point that the MB I was a new culture:

*"The break with the preceding period was indeed a sharp one and allowed only few left-overs of previous traditions to persist. The succeeding period, however, follows a normal course of development. The MB IIA period, epitomised in the strata G–F at Tell Beit Mirsim and Strata XIV–XIIIB at Megiddo, constitutes the link between the culture of the period under discussion and the 'true Middle Bronze Age' (Kenyon's description of the MB IIB loc.cit.). Some of the characteristic types of pottery have been arranged in Table form in Figure 1 to show their development from MB I through its Megiddo family to MB IIA. This line of continuity constitutes our main reason for retaining the old term and rejecting the new."*<sup>5:205</sup>

The end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, starting with Middle Bronze I therefore, is the most serious contender for the period of the Conquest, and if that be the case, then Middle Bronze I pottery must be a serious contender for the pottery of the nomadic Israelites in the wilderness and in their first settlement of the land.

Likewise, Ruth Amiram rejects a distinct cultural break at the end of Late Bronze as needed by the accepted chronology, and clearly places the new beginning at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age after the end of Early Bronze III. I quote:

*"In the discussion pertaining to the transition from the Early Bronze period to the Middle Bronze, we have emphasized the sharp cultural break between these two worlds. From the MB I onwards, the development from the material culture (to judge by its reflection in the pottery) is continuous, gradual and evolutionary to the end of the Iron Age or even later."*<sup>31:191</sup>

Not that Ruth Amiram was proposing a new chronology. On the contrary, she accepted the belief that the Israelite invasion occurred at the end of Late Bronze, and sadly I believe has missed the significance and poignancy of her own words, as has Kenyon before her.

Let us look at the biblical narrative of the Conquest and follow it step by step, looking at what cities have been excavated to see the consistency with the biblical narrative both historically and



geographically.

## JERICHO

The first conquest of Joshua in Palestine was Jericho. Garstang originally identified the destruction period of Jericho's Canaanite city as the end of Late Bronze Age. However, Kathleen Kenyon in her monumental excavation of Jericho has identified the destruction level which Garstang uncovered as the end of the Early Bronze Age III. Of this, she says that it came with "catastrophic completeness".<sup>28</sup> This was succeeded by a temporary occupation by the MB I people (Kenyon's Early Bronze — Middle Bronze). She says:

*"It is thus probable that there was a phase of occupation of the tell in which there were no solid structures. That there was such a camping phase would fit the evidence from the tombs of the nomadic and tribal organization of the newcomers."*<sup>29</sup> (See also Kenyon<sup>30,31</sup>)

Such a description matches exactly what we would expect of some of the Israelite host camping on the site after its destruction, until they were finally settled elsewhere.

Jericho at the end EB III is the logical place to see Joshua's conquest. The same holds true for Ai, Joshua's next battle zone (Joshua chapters 7 and 8).

## AI

Ai has been identified with Et Tell, west of Jericho. This site has been excavated by several expeditions which have concluded that occupation of Et Tell occurred as follows:<sup>32:19</sup>

Early Bronze Ib  
 Early Bronze Ic — destruction  
 Early Bronze II — destruction — ? earthquake  
 Early Bronze IIIa  
 Early Bronze IIIb — destruction  
 Iron Age I

Et Tell was left a ruin for a long period of time at the end of Early Bronze III.

*"Violent destruction overtook the city of Ai ca.2400 B.C. during the Fifth Dynasty of Egypt, and a 'dark age' fell upon the land with the appearance of nomadic invaders from the desert. The site was abandoned and left in ruins."*<sup>32:29</sup>

This was the end of EB III.

As Calloway, the Biblical Archaeologist author just quoted, has accepted the Israelite conquest placed at the end of the Late Bronze Age due to his reliance on the Egyptian and evolutionary-based chronology currently held, an absence of a Late Bronze period at Et Tell was a problem. This has resulted in many doubting that Et Tell is in fact biblical Ai. To quote Calloway:

*"It will be seen that the absence of any Canaanite city later than EB greatly complicates interpretation of the biblical Israelite conquest of Ai, for the mound was unoccupied at the time and had not been occupied since before the end of the third millennium B.C."*<sup>32:28</sup>

The time referred to as "the biblical conquest" in that author's view was the end of Late Bronze. No question is raised by the author as to the correctness of that currently held chronology, but simply a strained interpretation of the biblical narrative and thus a question of its credibility as an historical document is inferred.

*"Whether the tradition in Joshua claims for Israel a conquest in reality attributable to her predecessors in the land (over 1,000 years before!), or whether Israel's conquest of a different site has in the tradition been transferred to Ai, can only be conjectured."*<sup>32:28</sup>

Not even the slightest question of the credibility of the accepted chronology is raised. Its hold on the discipline is too great. Had the biblical documents been taken at face value and allowed to be the prime measure, the end of EB III at Ai, as well as at Jericho and other sites, would have confirmed the record of Scripture so vividly that all questions would have dissipated. But the confusion of the accepted chronology is allowed to continue.

It is my claim that the biblical documents must be the rule and these allow the profound destruction of EB III all across Palestine to be identified as the destruction of Joshua's conquest. It is so at both Ai and Jericho. The correspondence is exact.

## The Hivite Agreement

Joshua was next involved with a treaty with the Hivite cities of Gibeon, Beeroth, Chephirah, and Kirjath Jearim (Joshua chapter 9), which were thus spared destruction.

- (a) **Gibeon** (El Jib) has been excavated by James Pritchard.<sup>33</sup>
- (b) **Kirjath Jearim** is known as Abu Ghosh.
- (c) **Beeroth and Chephirah** have not been excavated.

The relevant periods at Abu Ghosh have not been excavated. Gibeon thus is the sole example here available for our comment. It has produced some spectacular finds, but the periods relevant to our discussion are inconclusive for purposes here under consideration.

There is evidence of MB occupation. There is also evidence of a vigorous Early Bronze period which Pritchard speculates was a walled city,<sup>33:150</sup>

although not uncovered. No certainty of any destruction level was found, so no further satisfactory conclusions can yet be arrived at. We must wait here for future work.

### The Southern Conquest — Amorite Territory

The next event in the period of the Conquest was Joshua's battle against the five Amorite kings of southern Canaan (Joshua 10), who were: –

- (a) Adonizedek of Jerusalem.
- (b) Hoham of Hebron.
- (c) Piram of Jarmuth.
- (d) Japhia of Lachish.
- (e) Debir of Eglon.

Jerusalem's Early Bronze period has not been satisfactorily studied. Jerusalem itself was conquered in 2 phases: –

1. The Amorite enclave was conquered by Joshua — this included apparently all but the stronghold of Zion (Joshua 10 and Judges 1:21).
2. The Jebusite stronghold of Zion was conquered by David (Late Bronze). The Mount of Olives shows MB I occupation.<sup>34</sup>

No significant details for **Hebron** of this period are available. With **Jarmuth** and **Lachish**, however, we are on better ground. On the other hand, **Eglon** (Joshua 10:34) has not yet been investigated nor clearly and unequivocally identified. Dorsey<sup>35</sup> has suggested that perhaps Tel Aitun represents the remains of Eglon. Other cities in this region mentioned by Joshua have also not yet been clearly identified or investigated, including **Libnah** (Joshua 10:29), perhaps Teil Bornat,<sup>35</sup> and **Makkedah** (Joshua 10:28), perhaps Khirbit el Qom<sup>35:191-2</sup> where EB — MB I Artifacts have been found.

### Jarmuth

This site has been geographically identified and is today called Tel Jarmuth, (Hebrew Yarmut, Arabic *Khirbet Yarmouk*.) about five kilometres south-west of modern Beth Shemesh.

The stratification of Tel Jarmuth is as follows:<sup>36,37,38</sup>

- Stratum 1 — Byzantine
- Stratum 2 — Early Bronze III B
- Stratum 3 — Early Bronze III A
- Stratum 4 — Early Bronze II
- Stratum 5 — Early Bronze I-II

There is no comment about any destruction of the latest Early Bronze Age city. There is no evidence from Joshua 10 that Joshua destroyed the city, only

that he slew the inhabitants. Thus Jarmuth of the revised chronology here presented would be an Early Bronze Age city whose population was terminated by Joshua's conquest. This is exactly consistent with the findings.

No further mention of Jarmuth is made in the Bible in the pre-Babylonian period. This is also consistent with the archaeological findings here presented, for Jarmuth's existence was terminated at the end of Early Bronze III.

In Joshua 15:35 Jarmuth is listed as one of the Shephelah cities of Judah, but this does not necessarily mean that it became inhabited by the Israelites after the Conquest, only that it was geographically in that territory.

Tel Jarmuth is totally consistent with the conquest story of Jarmuth's capture in Joshua 10 as understood by this revised chronology. However, the false suppositions of the accepted chronology have caused difficulty in accepting the site as biblical Jarmuth. As Ben-Tor puts it:

*“Unless future study at Tel Jarmuth established the existence of a Late Bronze Age settlement the inevitable conclusion will have to be that the generally accepted identification of the mound with the Jarmuth of the Book of Joshua and with the Yarmut mentioned in an Akkadian letter of the El Amarna period discovered by F.J. Blissat at Tell el Hessi — is untenable.”*<sup>38</sup>

The scholars recognise the geographical identification of Jarmuth, yet cannot accept it archaeologically because of the chronology they hold.

However, Dorsey says:

*“Note, for example, the case of Jarmuth, where Late Bronze Age remains are also absent, but where identification is hardly in question (in spite of the reservations expressed by Ben-Tor 1976)”*.<sup>35</sup>

Tel Jarmuth is further evidence of the correctness of the revised chronology, which places the Conquest of Joshua at the end of EB III.

### Lachish (Tel ed Duweir).

This is a huge mound thirty kilometres south-east of Ashkelon and has been extensively investigated. It was occupied in Early Bronze III, but the civilization of Early Bronze III was brought to an end — there was no destruction layer — so this is consistent with the narrative in Joshua 10 indicating it was captured but not destroyed (Joshua 10:32).

As Ussishkin says:

*“There is no layer of ash or burning to mark the end of the Early Bronze Age at Duweir, in contrast to other cities in this period, such as Jericho, where the Early Bronze Age levels terminated in destruction by fire. However, a lack of sherds between 3.3 and 3.6*

meters in the north-east section suggests an interruption in the occupation.”<sup>39</sup>

They were succeeded by the MB I people identified here as Israelites. Thus Lachish confirms the correctness of the revised chronology as here presented with Israelite conquest terminating the

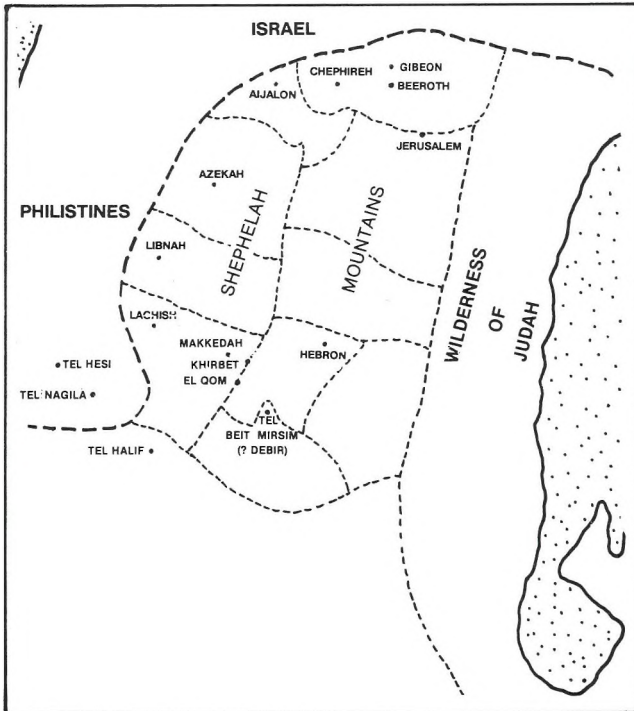


Figure 13. Division of Judah and Benjamin (after Dorsey<sup>35</sup>) with important narrative cities.

previous EB III Canaanite civilization. (It is of interest that at Lachish one of the earliest attempts at alphabetic writing was found in MB IIB layers.<sup>40</sup> By the revised chronology this is Israelite.)

So far the correspondence of the archaeological finds with the claims of the revised chronology, that is the biblical chronology, is excellent as opposed to the hotch-potch fit associated with the accepted chronology. Figures 13 and 14 indicate some of the other sites found in southern Palestine consistent with the Biblical narrative.

### Joshua’s Conquest of the North — Jabin, King of Canaan.

Following the southern conquests, Joshua was faced with a great northern battle led by Jabin, King of Hazor (Joshua 11). Jabin called together a whole region of kings and cities essentially from the Carmel-Beth Shean line northwards, and battle was joined north of the Sea of Galilee. This resulted in a defeat of the Canaanites. They appear to have been divided and driven in three directions: westwards towards Zidon, northward into the valley and eastward across into the area of Bashan.

Only four cities are mentioned in regard to this, namely Hazor, Madon, Shimron and Achshaph. Of these cities, only two have been excavated — **Hazor** and **Achshaph**.

### Hazor

Hazor, north of the Sea of Galilee, was excavated

SITE	COMMENT ON EB/MB	COMMENT ON LB/IRON I	IDENTIFICATION OF SITE
TELL BEIT MIRSIM	EB III PRESENT AND SUPERSEDED BY MB I CULTURE	LB PRESENT (STRATUM) DESTROYED AND SUPERSEDED BY LEVEL B1-A DECADENT LATE BRONZE FOLLOWED BY B2-‘PHILISTINE’	? DEBIR
TELL HALIF	EB III PRESENT (STRATA 15-12) AND ENDED. OCCUPATIONAL GAP — NO MB SETTLEMENT.	LB STRATA (11-8) SUPERSEDED BY IRON AGE I — SAME ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURE.	? ZEPHATH — HORMAH
TELL NESI	EB III (5 PHASES) OCCUPATION ENDED NO MB I — OCCUPATIONAL GAP.	LB PRESENT — OCCUPATIONAL GAP FOLLOWS	
Tell nagila	EB III ABANDONED NEXT INHABITED MB II B-C	LB ONLY ATTESTED BY POTTERY — GAP THEN IN OCCUPATION TILL IRON II	? ZIKLAG
KHIRBET EL QOM	EB III PRESENT REPLACED BY MB I	LB NOT PRESENT	? MAKKEDAH
	ALL CONSISTENT WITH PROPOSED ISRAELITE CONQUEST. END EB III CANAANITE. THEN NEW OR NO CULTURE	NOT CONSISTENT WITH DETAILS OF ISRAELITE CONQUEST.	

Figure 14. A comparison of other suitable sites relevant to the end of the EB III — LB conquest.

by Yigael Yadin, who found that a lower city of the Early Bronze Age was destroyed (Stratum XVIII).<sup>41</sup> This was replaced by a civilization of the MB I people which extended over the whole plateau, and in subsequent periods covered the same area in a much enlarged city of Hazor.

It is to be admitted that the Late Bronze here also shows destruction, and this city was replaced by a more modest city in Iron Age I.

### Achshaph

Achshaph is Tell Keisan. This has been excavated by a French expedition and although the EB III levels have not been specifically dealt with, the EB III city was a strong city which was replaced by an MB I civilization consistent with the new chronology presented here. The Late Bronze period at Achshaph, however, showed no such sudden change, but rather was gradual.<sup>42</sup>

Of the other cities mentioned in the narrative in Joshua 11 we have no satisfactory excavation details on which to work. However, Joshua chapter 12 gives a list of further kings who were slain in that great battle, and Judges chapter 1 indicates cities of the region which were not taken by the Israelites. Among these were **Taanach** and **Megiddo**.

### Taanach

Taanach was occupied during the EB II to III period.<sup>43</sup> The strata at Taanach show the destruction at the end of Late Bronze and no really significant occupation occurred at the city in Late Bronze II, making it very difficult to see a viable city present if the conquest of Joshua was at the end of Late Bronze II.

### Megiddo

Megiddo shows evidence of a large EB III fortress and then the gradual effect of the MB I settlers, resulting in a fused culture (Amiram's Group C pottery,<sup>3</sup> also referred to as EB IV pottery). The cultural sequences at Megiddo are totally consistent with an infiltration of MB I culture on a still existing EB III culture, forming a syncretic culture which has been referred to by some as EB IV. This, however, is totally consistent with the compromise culture of the Israelite/Canaanite peoples (Judges 1).

Joshua drove Jabin's forces in three northerly directions: one was to **Misrephoth Maim** — possibly identified with Tel Rosh Ha Nigra<sup>44</sup> (Joshua 11:8,13:6). This site was clearly existent in EB III consistent with the record of Joshua by this revised chronology. It was destroyed at the end of EB III, and not reoccupied until the Late Bronze Age. However, MB I artifacts were found nearby<sup>8</sup> at Tel et Tabayiq.<sup>45</sup>

### Tyre

Tyre was captured (Joshua 19:29) but absent in Judges 1. It clearly existed as a city then and the archaeological record admits to occupation throughout the Early Bronze Age (Strata XXVII–XXI).<sup>46</sup> This was succeeded by the Middle Bronze people (Strata XX–XX), which agrees with Scripture according to this revised chronology (Judges 1:31-absence), after possible destruction evident in the excavation. The city was obviously abandoned during MB II,<sup>46:72</sup> corresponding here to the silence in Judges, for Tyre is not met again in Scripture until David's day (Late Bronze) (Bikai<sup>46:5</sup> — there interpreted differently).

Very few of the other cities mentioned in Joshua 12 have been excavated. However, one thing is certain: those that have been presented and have been excavated are one hundred percent consistent with the details of Scripture, if the Conquest was at the end of Early Bronze III, whereas there are significant problems, particularly at Achshaph and Taanach, if the conquest was at the end of Late Bronze II.

## DISTRIBUTION OF MB I CULTURE

It is clear from Prag's discussion<sup>8:70</sup> that the distribution of EB-MB pottery as it is termed there, is found only in those areas that were occupied or travelled through by ancient Israel, or in the areas of ancient Moab. And if one excludes the EB IV Trans Jordan sequence as being Moabite, then it is very clear that the distribution of MB I pottery is one hundred percent consistent with the biblical narrative of the wandering and settlement of the Children of Israel. This becomes especially marked when one compares the Early Bronze distribution (EBA) and Middle Bronze distribution (MBA). This MB I culture did not strictly penetrate to any extent into the north Lebanon or Syrian area, but was essentially Palestinian and Trans Jordan in distribution.

## THE MB I CULTURE WAS A NOMADIC AND SETTLING CULTURE

It is clear from all the discussion previously that the MB I culture has for many years been regarded as a nomadic culture. However, there have been many who have emphasised a sedentary element to this culture, and so an argument has developed between these two ideas. However, the biblical model of the wandering and settling Israelites is a perfect model to explain this particular phenomenon found archaeologically.



### The MB I People — A Tribal People

Dever<sup>26</sup> and Amiram<sup>3,5</sup> have emphasised the divisions within the MB I culture. Of significance is Amiram's statement:

*"Groups A and B are closely related to each other, a kind of relationship which is probably more "horizontal" than "vertical", that is, a relationship that may point to pottery traditions of kindred tribes which came from the same general cultural area, rather than generic relationship."*<sup>3:82</sup>

Amiram divides her groups from the Palestinian area into groups A, B and C. Group A is the southern area and includes the ancient territories of Judah, Ephraim and related tribes. Group B is the northern area north of the Megiddo-Beth Shean line, and includes the area occupied by the tribes of Naphtali, Zebulun and Asher. And then Group C, which shows affinity with the previous period of EB III, is found along the Megiddo-Beth Shean line. Very interestingly, this happens to be exactly the same area mentioned in Judges chapter 1, where the Israelites failed to drive out enough of the Canaanites and instead just intermingled with the previous Canaanite culture. Thus a syncretic culture developed incorporating the two. This has been termed by some as EB IV. However, such is a poor title. Amiram ironically but unconsciously states the position when she says:

*"It may well be that this 'return' is due to some surviving traditions of earlier periods."*<sup>3:81</sup>

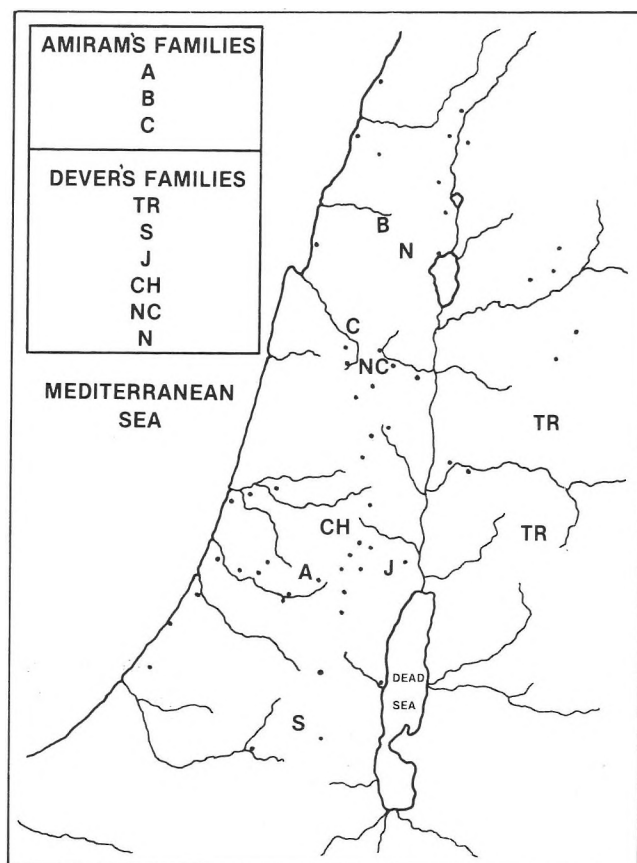
Dever<sup>26:37-62</sup> discusses the same subject matter, but includes also the Trans Jordan area and divides the MB I/EB IV groups into several more families. They are:

1. Family S from the south,
2. Family CH from the central hills of the ancient Ephraim area,
3. Family NC along the Megiddo-Beth Shean line,
4. Family N in the northern area, corresponding to Amiram's Group B family,
5. Family J for Jericho, and
6. Family TR for Trans Jordan.

When this is plotted out on a map (see Figure 15), it is clear that the cultures represented lie exactly in the areas which ancient Israel occupied. This includes the previous stipulation regarding the Moabite and the Negev areas.

More ironic is Dever's statement:

*"The EB IV/MB I transitional phase in Transjordan was brief and rapidly gave way to a culture which expanded vigorously, chiefly into Palestine, where its fully developed expression is seen in the numerous sedentary and semi-sedentary MB I sites of Southern Palestine ... Elsewhere I have*



**Figure 15.** Distribution of MB I artifacts, showing the location of the various cultural divisions or families suggested by Amiram<sup>3</sup> and Dever<sup>26</sup>.

*attempted to document this expansion and to distinguish geographical and cultural "Families" in MB I.*

*The diffusion in Palestine thus begin via the Jordan Valley and Jericho and spread primarily southwestward at first."*<sup>26:57</sup>

And he continues:

*"It is now clear that 'Family TR' deserves a classification of its own and that it may eventually emerge as the ultimate source for the material culture in question. The designation 'Family J' is then better reserved for the pottery of the Jericho tombs, which is still distinctive but can now be seen as derivative from 'Family TR'"*<sup>26:58</sup>

And he concludes:

*"This proves further that there are link-ups between all these 'Families.'"*

When Dever's assessment of the families of MB I are put together on a map (see Figure 15) it is very hard to distinguish between this pattern and the biblical model of the Conquest of the Children of Israel from Trans Jordan across into Jericho and diffusing across into the land. Moreover, I wish to assert that the biblical model is the only model which gives full credibility to the details of the



archaeological excavations resulting in the artifacts of MB I — EB IV.

### **The MB I People — A Settling People giving rise to the following cultures**

This has been argued over many times, but Amiram is adamant that the culture from MB I onwards to the end of the Iron Age is “continuous, gradual, and evolutionary to the end of the Iron Age or even later.”<sup>3:191</sup>

She, of course, has had her critics, but the evidence against such is not solid. It is very clear that the MB I culture was different from that which preceded it, even though a few features were common. But this is not difficult to understand when one appreciates the geographical and family relationships of Israel, the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Midianites and other tribes that inhabited the area. Similarities had to exist. Cultural intermingling did exist, but there was essentially, “a sharp cultural break” between EB III and MB I.

Moreover, the MB I people have shown a lack at that time of any buildings. The buildings first appear during the MB IIA in Palestine. (This does not of course refer to the temporary structures seen in the Negev.)

Jericho shows evidence of marked encampment on the site of the destroyed city. Similarly, Hazor shows similar evidence of encamping on the destroyed city as does Tell Beit Mirsim. Such is consistent with the narrative of the Children of Israel who conquered this previous culture.

I, therefore, contend from all the details presented here that the complex culture of the EB IV — MB I people is understandable and totally explainable only by the biblical model of the Children of Israel’s Exodus and Conquest. The MB I people of the Negev/Sinai were the wandering Israelites. The MB I people of Trans Jordan and Palestine were settling Israelites. The EB IV peoples of Trans Jordan essentially were the Moabites. EB IV of Palestine was the syncretic culture of Israelite and Canaanite features.

Recognition of this allows us to immediately reset the scene on the chronology of the ancient world, to replace Abraham in his proper context, and Solomon in his, and to get a clear correlation of archaeological artifacts with the biblical model of the ancient world.

### **EVENTS IN OTHER NATIONS DURING MB I.**

A letter from the Archives of Mari, from approximately the first half of the reign of

Zimri’Lim,<sup>47</sup> mentions the name of a king of Hazor, almost certainly the same as the city of Palestine that Joshua conquered. The period the letter refers to is almost certainly the same time period with which we are here dealing, that of the conquests of the MB I people of Palestine.

The name of the king of Hazor was Ibni-Hadad — an extremely interesting name considering the period with which we are dealing. If we exclude the second part of the name, which obviously is the name of the king’s god, and concentrate upon the proper part of the name, that is, **Ibni**, it is almost certain that this word is exactly the same as the name translated in the Bible as **Jabin**, king of Hazor. They are one and the same name.

Now we know from the Scriptures, Joshua chapter 11, that Hazor was ruled at this time by Jabin, that he was “head of all those kingdoms” surrounding him (that is, the Canaanite kingdoms), and that he was anticipating a battle with the forces of Israel.

From the Mari letter it is clear that Ibni-Hadad, king of Hazor, was getting a rather large shipment of tin. The most likely reason for such a shipment, of course, was to use in the forming of bronze, and while bronze can be used for many purposes, almost certainly a large amount of it would go into making weapons. The scene is consistent with what we would expect of a king preparing for war. The case cannot be proved and we will wait for further evidence to confirm it, but the possibility of Ibni-Hadad being in fact the biblical Jabin, king of Hazor of Joshua chapter 11, is very real, and would certainly be another piece of evidence confirming the hypothesis of the MB I peoples of Palestine being in fact the invading Israelites. This would, of course, drastically affect the chronology of Mesopotamia. It would place the great Hammurapi of Babylon contemporary with Joshua and, therefore, the laws that he propounded for his people which have so often been quoted as preceding Moses, would have in fact succeeded Moses’ Ten Commandments. It would also place the great Amorite kingdom of Hammurapi of Babylon in the early period of the times of the Judges, around 1400 B.C. at its beginning, and the fall of the city of Mari would be approximately at the time of the conquests of Israel.

### **EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY RELEVANT TO THE PALESTINIAN MB I.**

It is when we turn to Egyptian chronology that we meet the greatest difficulty with the new chronology of Palestine here presented, for contemporary periods in Egypt under the presently-held chronology

passes from Dynasty VI through VII, VIII, IX, X, XI and XII in sequence.

Early Bronze III of Palestine is commonly held to embrace the same period as Dynasties III to VI in Egypt,<sup>3:67</sup> whereas the period here specified, otherwise known as EB-MB is believed to have been from 2,350 to 1,900 B.C., in other words, covering the first intermediate period into the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt.<sup>8:69</sup> Generally, MB I is seen as finishing between 1,900 to 1,850 B.C. in the last quarter of the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty.<sup>5:224</sup> Oren<sup>48</sup> places the transition in the EB-MB period, which he calls EB IVA to EB IVB, at about 2,000 B.C., and insists that this date is firmly supported by stratified objects with royal Egyptian names of the early Twelfth Dynasty at Byblos.

Now if the Egyptian chronology were on solid grounds, we might have some firm basis from which to argue, but despite the common belief among Egyptologists and archaeologists in general that Egyptian chronology is established, the case is in fact the opposite. Theile states that it is just the opposite:

*“There were also frequent Hebrew contacts with Egypt, Syria, and other lesser states, but these contacts were in most instances very indefinite in point of time, and the chronologies of these nations are likewise far from being positively established.”*<sup>49</sup> (emphasis ours)

The term “these nations” also includes in his discussion the nation of Egypt. Even Gardiner, who in no case can be said to be unenthusiastic about the commonly accepted chronology of Egypt, states:

*“The indispensable dynastic framework of Egyptian history shows lamentable gaps and many a doubtful attribution. If this be true of the skeleton, how much more is it of the flesh and blood with which we could wish it covered. Historical inscriptions of any considerable length are as rare as the isolated islands in an imperfectly charted ocean. The importance of many of the kings can be guessed at merely from the number of stelae or scarabs that bear their names. It must never be forgotten that we are dealing with civilization thousands of years old and one of which only tiny remnants have survived. What is proudly advertised as Egyptian history is merely a collection of rags and tatters.”*<sup>50:53</sup>

And yet despite this claim that Egyptian history is “merely a collection of rags and tatters”, Egyptian history is commonly held up as the rule by which the ancient world is measured. What folly! Rather than attempt to revise the presently-held Egyptian chronology against the background of the Palestinian chronology of the Bible which claims no gaps, the archaeologists of today insist on pursuing a basis for their chronological framework which is “merely a collection of rags and tatters”. It may well be said of

them, as Sennacherib said to Hezekiah:

*“Lo, you trust in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt which if a man leans on it, it goes into his palm and pierces it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.”* (Isaiah 36:6 — Green’s Interlinear)

Some have indeed attempted a re-evaluation of the chronology of Egypt, a mammoth task. Their works have not been perfect but they have made positive contributions, and in this area of the Early Bronze to Middle Bronze period, Courville<sup>51</sup> has argued reasonably for a Sixth Dynasty of Egypt contemporary with an over-ruling Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt. He has seen the chronological discrepancies between the two systems — the Bible, which is a reasonable historical document, and the accepted chronology of Egypt.

It needs to be commented that the time period allotted to the MB I period of Palestine, against the Egyptian chronology of something in excess of two hundred years, seems very long for a civilization that in Palestine and the Negev itself showed evidence of only transient occupation. It is to be admitted that there are several layers in certain places of the Trans Jordan area, but as this article has explained, the culture so attributed EB IV is far better seen against the Moabite culture and against several phases of their relationship. But a two hundred year period for MB I in Palestine seems to be grossly unjustified, so the period should again be looked at against Courville’s suggestion of a contemporaneous Sixth and Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt.

It is not the task of this writer at this moment to enter into the mammoth job of reconciliation of the biblical data with the Egyptian chronology. My main task is to attempt to show that the biblical chronology explains very satisfactorily the complete data of Palestine, and then to start from that base and lead out to surrounding countries, such as Egypt, to re-evaluate their culture in the light of Palestinian archaeology and the biblical documents. That there has been dissatisfaction with the accepted chronology is obvious when one looks at such volumes as Courville’s “The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications”,<sup>51</sup> Velikovsky’s “Ages in Chaos”,<sup>52</sup> Bimson’s “Redating the Exodus and Conquest”,<sup>53</sup> and Taylor’s “Rewriting Bible History.”<sup>54</sup>

Egyptology cannot claim to have an established Egyptian chronology in absolute terms any further back than the Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt, and even here, the dates which are established against Bible and Assyrian records must be held suspect, at least to a few years difference. How much more beyond the Twenty-fifth Dynasty into the past can it be said that the case has not been established.

It is worth considering some of the relationships that may have been possible between the Sixth and

the Twelfth Dynasties. Edwards certainly opens the possibility unconsciously when referring to the pyramid of Sesostris the First:

*“and the extent to which its Mortuary Temple was copied from the Mortuary Temples of the VI th Dynasty, as illustrated by that of Pepi II, is clearly evident.”*<sup>55:220</sup>

*The return of a culture to what it was before in style after some three hundred years must be an uncommon event. The theoretical possibility that these two cultures, the Twelfth and the Sixth Dynasties were in fact contemporary and followed a common pattern of Mortuary Temple must be borne in mind as real.*

## CONCLUSION

The author here contends that the MB I period of Palestine must be re-evaluated, and has proposed that it be taken as the culture of the wandering and invading Israelites in Palestine. He has presented arguments in that direction and intends to continue on from there over the other periods of the biblical narrative and the archaeological records to show that this re-evaluation has strong grounds on which to rest. He would thus issue a challenge for reconsideration of the biblical framework as the framework of ancient world history.

## REFERENCES

- Osgood, A.J.M., 1984. The times of the Judges — a chronology. **EN Tech. J.**, 1: 141–158.
- Bright, J., 1979. **A History of Israel**, SCM Press, London, pp.105 and 121.
- Amiram, R., 1969. **Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land**. Massada Press, pp. 82, 191.
- Kenyon, K., 1960. **Jericho Archaeology**, p. 274.
- Amiram, R., 1960. The MB I Pottery in Palestine. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 10 (4):204–224.
- Albright, W., 1961. The Negev and Sinai in MB I. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 163:37.
- Cohen, R., and Dever, W., 1979. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 236 (3):42–57.
- Prag, K., 1974. **Levant VI**9–116.
- Cohen, R., 1978. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 28:189.
- Glueck, N. 1955. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research** 138: 13.
- Cohen, R., and Dever, W., 1981. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 243:57–72.
- Glueck, N., 1956. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 142:17–34.
- Glueck, N., 1957. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 145:11–24.
- Glueck, N., 1958. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 149:8–16.
- Glueck, N., 1958. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 152:18–38.
- Glueck, N., 1960. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 159:3–13.
- Albright, W.F., 1961. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 163:33–53.
- Glueck, N., 1961. **The Other Side of Jordan**, American Schools of Oriental Research, Chicago, pp. 80–81.
- Evenari, Aharoni, Shanan, and Tadmor, 1958. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 8: 231–268
- Aharoni, Y., 1959. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 9:142–143.
- Aharoni, Y., 1963. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 13:141.
- Rothenberg, B., 1970. **Palestine Exploration Quarterly**, 1970:4–29.
- Rothenberg, B., 1961. **God's Wilderness**, Thames and Hudson, London.
- Raikes, T.D., 1980. **Levant**, XII:42 and map.
- MacDonald, B., 1982. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 245:35–52.
- Dever, W., 1973. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 210:57.
- Van Hattem, W.C., 1981. **Biblical Archaeologist**, 44(2):88.
- Kenyon, K., 1960. **Archaeology in the Holy Land**, Ernest Benn, London, p. 134.
- Kenyon, K., 1981. **Jericho III**, British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, London, p. 105.
- Kenyon, K., 1960. **Jericho I**, British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, London, p. 182.
- Kenyon, K., 1965. **Jericho H**, British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, London, p.35.
- Callaway, J., 1976. **Biblical Archaeologist**, 28:19–29.
- Pritchard, J., 1962. **Gibeon, where the Sun Stood Still**, Princeton University Press.
- Avigad, N., 1980. **Discovering Jerusalem**, “Shikmona” Publishing in cooperation with the Israel Exploration Society, London. 35. Dorsey, D., 1980. **Tel Aviv**, 7 (3/4):189.
- de Miroschedji, P., 1982. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 32:159.
- de Miroschedji, P., 1981. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 31:121.
- Ben-Tor, A., 1976. **Encyclopaedia of Excavations in the Holy Land**, vol.II, Oxford University Press, London, p. 544.
- Ussishkin, D., 1977. **Encyclopaedia of Archaeology**, vol. III, Israel Exploration Society and Massada Press, p. 739.
- Ussishkin, D., 1977. **Encyclopaedia of Archaeology**, vol. III, Israel Exploration Society and Massada Press, p. 741.
- Yadin, Y., 1961. **Hazor**, vol. I–V, The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
- Briend J. and Herbert, J-B., 1981. **Tell Keisan**, Obo, Paris, pp. 388–9.
- Glook, A.E., 1976. **Encyclopaedia of Excavations in the Holy Land**, vol. IV. Masada Press, Jerusalem, pp. 1143–47.
- Glook, A.E., 1976. **Encyclopaedia of Excavations in the Holy Land**, vol. IV, Massada Press, Jerusalem, p. 1023.
- Amiram, R., 1952. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 2:142.
- Bikai, P.M., 1978. **Pottery of Tyre**, Aris and Phillips, pp. 5 and 72.
- Malamat, A., 1971. **Israel Exploration Journal**, 21:31–38.
- Oren, E.D., 1973. **Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research**, 210:37.
- Thiele, E., 1951. **Mysterious Numbers of Hebrew Kings**, Paternoster, p. 39.
- Gardiner, A., 1961. **Egypt of the Pharaohs**, Oxford.
- Courville, D., 1971. **Exodus Problem and its Ramifications**, vol. 1, Challenge Books, Loma Linda, California.
- Velikovsky, I., 1973. **Ages in Chaos**, Abacus, London.
- Bimson, J.F., 1981. **Redating the Exodus and Conquest**, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, The Almond Press, Sheffield.
- Taylor, C.V., 1983. **Rewriting Bible History**, Tabor, Adelaide.
- Edwards, I.E.S., 1947 and 1961. **The Pyramids of Egypt**, Pelican, Middlesex, p. 220.