

Problems with 'Searching for Moses' article

David Down incorrectly claimed that Velikovsky's revised (low) chronology 'is presently being taught at Cambridge University by England's top archaeologist, Lord Colin Renfrew'.¹ Prof. Colin Renfrew, also known as Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn, is now retired and therefore no longer teaches at Cambridge University, and in fact never advocated Velikovsky's chronology, but rather thought that conventional dates within ancient history were generally too low. He became associated with low chronologies through writing the Foreword to Peter James' *Centuries of Darkness*.² However, his motivation for writing this was a common disagreement with conventional chronologies, not an agreement that chronologies should be revised downwards. On the one occasion that I spoke to Renfrew about *Centuries of Darkness*,³ his recollection of the book was insufficient to give grounds to the assumption that every author of a foreword has read carefully the book which their comments precede. Renfrew should not be cited as an advocate of low chronologies.

P.J. Williams
University of Aberdeen
SCOTLAND

References

1. David Down replies, *Journal of Creation* 20(1):43, 2006.
2. James, P., Thorpe, I. J., Kokkinos, N., Morkot R. and Frankish, J., *Centuries of Darkness: A Challenge to the Conventional Chronology of Old World Archaeology*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1991.
3. Probably around 1993, while he was Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, where I was a student.

David Down replies:

Thank you for your letter. Concerning Lord Colin Renfrew, I can only go on the interview I had with him

in the House of Lords in May 2004.¹ I can speak with certainty on what we discussed, because with his permission I recorded the interview. Moreover, I subsequently reported this interview in my magazine *Archaeological Diggings* and I submitted the text to him for approval before I printed it.

Pete speaks of 'Velikovsky's low chronology'. This term was not mentioned in the interview. Lord Renfrew has never subscribed to Velikovsky's views. He simply endorsed what Peter James wrote, which is a reduction of 250 years at the time of the Third Intermediate Period (dynasties 21–24). The importance of this conclusion is not the length of time but that it strikes at the traditional chronology, in particular it destroys the so-called 'Sothic Cycle' which is the only 'secure' dating of Egyptian history that archaeologists can rely on. In my editorial of the August 2004 edition of *Archaeological Diggings* I wrote this:

'While in London a few weeks later I was privileged to spend an hour in the House of Lords with Lord Colin Renfrew. In 1991 Peter James published a book called "Centuries of Darkness". The foreword to this book was written by Lord Renfrew who is the leading archaeological scholar in Cambridge University. He was then Professor Renfrew and he wrote in this foreword, "The revolutionary suggestion is made here that the existing chronologies for that crucial phase in human history are in error by several centuries, and that, in consequence, history will have to be rewritten ... I feel that their critical analysis is right, and that a chronological revolution is on its way".'²

I do not know if Lord Renfrew was still teaching in Cambridge at the time, but he gave me that impression.

David Down
Hornsby, New South Wales
AUSTRALIA

References

1. *Archaeological Diggings*, p. 46, May 2004.
2. *Archaeological Diggings*, pp. xv and xvi, August 2004.