

THE GENESIS OF
ISRAEL AND EGYPT

THE GENESIS OF
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Vol. 1 in the series
Ages in Alignment

Emmet Sweeney

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INTRODUCTION

One of the perennial ambitions of Christian Europeans, throughout the centuries, has been the verification of the Bible. Beginning with Eusebius, in the fourth century, Christian writers sought to enlist the histories of Mesopotamia and Egypt to answer the attacks of those who viewed the Old Testament as fable or, even worse, as propaganda. In this spirit Eusebius, employing the Egyptian history of the Ptolemaic scholar Manetho, constructed a chronology for Egypt based on biblical time scales. Thus for example he followed earlier Jewish commentators in tying the start of Egyptian history to the start of Hebrew history. Such endeavors made Ramses II contemporary with the Exodus, supposedly in the fourteenth or fifteenth century BC (for the simple reason that the Book of Exodus claimed the enslaved Israelites had built a city named Ramesses) and identified Menes, the first pharaoh, with Adam (because Menes or Min sounded like “man”, a common enough word in ancient languages), thereby making Egyptian civilization commence around 3750 BC, the date of Creation favored by Jewish chroniclers.

Over the centuries, the early Christian and Jewish writers’ Egyptian system became the “traditional” chronology for the Kingdom of the Nile, and, incredibly enough (though few contemporary Egyptologists are aware of it), it still forms the basis of our understanding of that history.

With the translation of the hieroglyphs in the years following 1821, it was confidently expected that biblical history was about to receive dramatic con-

firmation. It was hoped that archeology would disclose Egyptian references to the great characters and events mentioned in the Bible. Now that Ramses II for example was more than a name in Manetho's list, it was believed that documents from his time might contain information relating to the Exodus. But such hopes were soon dashed, as it became apparent that the native literature of Egypt was remarkably silent with regard to the Hebrews. Absolutely nothing, it seemed, from Egyptian literature could be recognized as referring to the great events of Hebrew history. As the nineteenth century progressed, such efforts intensified, but always with the same negative result. By 1900 there was a general resignation on the part of orientalists that nothing of the sort would ever be found. Sporadic attempts, it is true, were made over the next half century to locate the missing links. It was found, for example, that a pharaoh named Akhnaton had established a monotheistic cult near the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty and that during his time a semi-nomadic group named "Habiru" had caused much disruption in Palestine. More than one historian and at least one noted psychiatrist (Sigmund Freud) speculated that Moses might have been a contemporary of Akhnaton and had derived his own monotheistic ideas from the Egyptian heretic. Yet apart from monotheism, there was nothing to recommend the "fix." Neither Akhnaton nor any of his predecessors, or successors, mentioned the presence in Egypt of Hebrew slaves, and they certainly made no reference to anything remotely resembling the dramatic events described in the Book of Exodus. The consensus to this day, expressed by O. Eissfeldt in 1971 in the pages of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, is that, "There is no evidence outside the Old Testament for the sojourn of Israel in Egypt or for the exodus."

Thus all endeavors to synchronize the two histories came to grief, and eventually the whole idea was abandoned. It is now part of accepted wisdom that attempts to identify biblical personalities in Egyptian records is futile since the characters mentioned in the Bible — Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the rest — were not the great men that the scriptural sources implied. Indeed, if they existed at all, they must have been minor figures whom the Egyptians had not thought worth mentioning. Any attempt now made to find "proof" for the Bible (especially its earlier parts) in archeology is treated with the greatest skepticism, and it is the opinion of almost all orientalists that efforts in this direction be consigned to the realms of the lunatic fringe. Quite simply, such work is not to be taken seriously.

But there have been dissenting voices. An academic storm was raised during the 1950s by the work of Immanuel Velikovsky, who argued that the catastrophic events described so vividly in the earliest parts of the Old Testament (i.e., the Deluge, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Exodus etc.) did actually occur and occurred very much as they were described. Velikovsky held that the last of these, the Exodus, which touched directly on Egypt, was in fact a major landmark in Egyptian history. He demonstrated with admirable logic that a series of obscure hieroglyphic documents, collectively known as the “Pessimistic” literature, which spoke of chaos throughout the land and slave rebellion, were Egyptian references to the events described in the Book of Exodus and showed that modern scholars had missed the identification because they had fundamentally misunderstood the Exodus. The Ten Plagues and the parting of the Red Sea were not simply “miracles” worked by Yahweh to save the Children of Israel, they were local manifestations of a catastrophe of nature that had afflicted the entire earth and the “Pessimistic” texts (such as the *Admonitions of Ipuwer*) were the Egyptian recollections of the same event.

Yet allowing Ipuwer and the other “Pessimistic” writers to be contemporaries of the Exodus brought to light an enormous distortion in ancient chronology: For the “Pessimistic” texts were generally believed to have been written five or six centuries before the Exodus, at the end of Egypt’s Old Kingdom — supposedly circa 2200 BC. How then, even if scholars had remarked on the apparent similarities between the two bodies of literature, could they have spoken of the same thing? The chronological error, said Velikovsky, had effectively made nonsense of both Egyptian and Hebrew history, with the result that happenings of momentous importance had been effaced from the history books. Realizing that Egyptian chronology was wrong, Velikovsky set about trying to correct it and also to identify the origins of the error. He went part of the way towards a resolution of both questions, yet he never really got to the bottom of either. His “Ages in Chaos” series of books, which were intended to correct the chronology, remained incomplete and unfinished when he died. And he failed also to identify the true source of Egypt’s faulty timescale.

Velikovsky’s most comprehensive discussion of the sources of Egyptian chronology is found in his *Peoples of the Sea* (1977). There he puts the blame squarely on Manetho and on Egyptologists of the nineteenth century, who

tried to construct the timescale of pharaonic history around the thirty dynasties mentioned by Manetho. Velikovsky thus assumed that it was Egypt and the Egyptologists who were to blame and that the Bible and biblical chronology was correct. In this he was very much mistaken.

As it transpired, a comprehensive overview of the sources of ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian chronology had to await the arrival of Gunnar Heinsohn and his work on the scene in the 1980s. Heinsohn called his readers' attention to an epoch before the advent of scientific archeology, back to the early centuries of the Christian era. It was then, he pointed out, that writers such as Eusebius and Julius Africanus had sought to make the history of Egypt, as it appeared in Manetho, agree with that of the Old Testament. Indeed, Heinsohn noted, the attempt to synchronize the two histories began even before the advent of Christianity, with the Jewish chroniclers of Ptolemaic Alexandria. In a way, Africanus and Eusebius merely refined and fine-tuned the work these men had done. Thus when European scholars of the nineteenth century founded the science of Egyptology they did not do so in a vacuum. There already existed a "traditional" history of Egypt, one that was taught in universities and which was based firmly upon the Old Testament. Illustration of this is seen in the fact that before the Battle of the Pyramids, in 1798, Napoleon pointed to Cheops' monument and admonished his men with the words "forty centuries look down on you." He thus placed the Great Pyramid around 2200 BC (very close to the circa 2500 BC in modern textbooks). Yet this was over twenty years before Champollion had read the first line of an Egyptian inscription!

Why then did the archeologists, in the years after Champollion's breakthrough, not jettison the Bible-base chronology and start from scratch? The answer is telling: The early archeologists, from Champollion onwards, were almost all either clergymen or at least devout Christians. The very motivation for the study of Egypt was to prove the Bible correct. One of Champollion's first accomplishments in Egypt was to identify a pharaoh named Sosenk, of the Twenty-Second Dynasty, with the biblical Shishak, who according to the Book of Kings had plundered Solomon's Temple sometime around 920 BC — according to the chronology of the Old Testament.

Champollion and his successors thus did not question the traditional chronology in a radical way; they merely tried to fine-tune it and provide it with some form of scientific justification. This they felt they had found in

the so-called Sothic Calendar. I need not go into the details here of the Sothic Calendar and its pseudo-scientific methodology, for it has already been thoroughly debunked — as well as formally repudiated by none other than Wolfgang Helck, the Nestor of European Egyptological studies. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century it provided the Christian Egyptologists with what they desired. They proceeded, using this, to formulate the definitive Egyptian chronology found to this day in textbooks, a chronology which is essentially the same as that constructed by Eusebius and Africanus all those centuries ago. Thus Menes the first pharaoh was brought down a little from the biblical date of 3750 BC to 3300 or 3200 BC, whilst Ramses II was reduced from his biblical date of 1450 BC to roughly 1300 BC. Sosenk I, of Manetho's Twenty-Second Dynasty, was kept in precisely the same place, namely around 920 to 900 BC.

These textbook dates are, of course, generally believed by youthful undergraduate students of our time to have nothing to do with the Bible, and to this day (notwithstanding Helck's public statement in the 1980s), they are taught that the chronology they learn from their professors has a scientific basis. Yet in the third edition of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, we find the following comment from a leading scholar concerning the date of the Exodus: "The implication [from the Book of Exodus] that there was some specially energetic activity in building leads to the assumption that the pharaoh who displayed it was Ramesses II (1304–1237 BC), pre-eminent among the rulers of Egypt for his building activity. The mention of the cities Pithom and Ramses [in Exodus] makes the conclusion a practical certainty" (O. Eissfeldt in *CAH*, Vol. 2 part 2, pp. 321-2). The writer of these words evidently believed that the date of Ramses II was arrived at independently of the Bible and that this date acted as a check and confirmation of the biblical date. Yet his own statement that the mention of a city called Ramses in Exodus made the connection a "certainty" betrays the true source of his chronology. Thus the date of the Exodus initially provided Ramses II with his place in history, and now Ramses II provides the Exodus with its place, even though the copious records of this pharaoh contain "no evidence" for either the sojourn of the Israelites or the Exodus. The circle of reasoning is complete.

Clearly then, there is strong evidence that Gunnar Heinsohn's ideas, radical though they might be, are correct and that all of the dates provided for the pharaohs are fictitious.

The present writer, convinced by the arguments of first Velikovsky and then Heinsohn, began work on a general reconstruction of ancient history in the late 1980s. Heeding Heinsohn's call to leave aside all preconceptions, I have attempted to let the archeology, the stratigraphy and the historiography, speak for itself. When that is done, an astonishing picture begins to emerge. Abandoning the biblical idea that high culture arose in the third millennium BC, it soon becomes clear that the ancient civilizations were not nearly as old as is now imagined: And with this realization comes the solution to myriads of anomalies, puzzles and riddles that have perplexed scholars for the past two hundred years. How could the Egyptians of the Pyramid Age for example, cut and carve granite, basalt and the almost diamond-hard diorite using the copper and flint tools of the third millennium BC? And how could those same craftsmen have employed Pythagorean-style geometry in such a remote epoch? These mysteries have led to much wild speculation, but they are resolved instantly when we realize that the pyramids were not constructed in the third millennium, but in the ninth and eighth centuries, where the Greek Father of History placed them. The mysteries and puzzles virtually solve themselves once the chronology is corrected.

But this is about more than just resolving mysteries. Truly astonishing is the picture that begins to emerge once the hinges of world history are hung correctly. Great characters and events, long spoken of but previously untraceable in the archeology, now reveal themselves. Catastrophes of nature, for example, clearly and graphically mentioned in all the ancient literatures, including the Bible, are found to show themselves by the signature of devastation and destruction they left in the ground. Most surprisingly of all, however, the histories of Egypt and Israel, which had previously displayed only contradiction and dissonance, now begin to form a single harmonious whole. The early history of the Hebrews does agree, and in a most dramatic fashion, with the early history of the Egyptians. The agreement was missed because of the insistence of Christian scholars that every word of the Bible be taken as literal truth. And it was the mistaken attempt to make Egyptian history conform to this fundamentalist world-view that did more than anything else, ironically enough, to thwart attempts to make the two histories agree and to thoroughly destroy the Old Testament's credibility.

The central theme of this work then, the first volume of my Ages in Alignment series, is the parallel origins of these two neighboring and closely re-

lated lands. The Book of Genesis insists that the Egyptians and Israelites interacted at the very beginning and the association established then continued unbroken for many centuries — an association which has however never been demonstrated. Yet agreement there is, and the first comes right at the start. The earliest important event of the Bible is the Flood of Noah which is said to have covered the earth and destroyed most human and animal life. Archeologists now claim that no trace of such an event can be found (though earlier generations of explorers, mainly paleontologists, apparently found its signature everywhere, as shall be seen at the end of the present volume). Nevertheless, archeologists did, in very many parts of the world, find abundant evidence of cataclysmic destruction, consistent with the action of flood waters. Those conducting the excavations however had to interpret what they found in accordance with textbook chronology. The result was that destruction episodes, which were in fact contemporary, were placed centuries apart. Thus for example the great flood discovered by Leonard Woolley at Ur in Mesopotamia was deemed to be a local event, since it was claimed that no trace of the inundation could be found outside of Mesopotamia. Yet destruction levels in Syria and elsewhere, which even a rudimentary examination of the evidence would have proven to be contemporary with the flood of Ur, were placed a thousand years later by scholars who could not extricate themselves from the mindset of the chronology which they learned at university.

In this way the true nature and scale of the Flood of Ur was disguised, and a totally distorted view of ancient history, which denied the Deluges reported by all ancient peoples, was pieced together.

Chapter 2 develops the same theme, illustrating how a thousand-year discrepancy between the archeology of Syria/Palestine on the one hand and Mesopotamia and Egypt on the other was born from the distorted Egyptian chronology and is reflected in the historiography of the two regions. Thus we find that the epoch of Abraham, the founding father of Israel, and the epoch of Menes, the founder of pharaonic Egypt, were one and the same. Both characters were said to have lived just a few generations after the waters of the flood had receded from the face of the earth. Furthermore, both of them share many of the characteristics of the god Thoth, or Mercury/Hermes, who in ancient tradition was said to have bequeathed civilization to mankind. Indeed, both Abraham and Menes were regarded as founders of civiliza-

tion. The problem here, of course, is that Abraham is conventionally placed around 2000 BC, whereas Menes is dated to 3300 or 3200 BC. How then, could they be contemporary? In fact, both dates are wrong. Investigation reveals that the two characters (neither of whom can be regarded as historical in the strict sense of the word) belong together, though in an epoch much more recent than either of them has been placed. The Egyptian founder-hero and his Hebrew counterpart should both have been placed around 1100 BC, which means in effect that whilst 1000 “phantom” years have been added to Hebrew history, over 2000 years have been added to the Egyptian.

It was just these unnaturally extended chronologies that kept Egyptian and Hebrew histories “out of sync” and contradictory.

Having thus linked the epoch of Abraham with that of Menes, we are presented with an entirely new and unexpected view of ancient times. We now find the histories of Israel and Egypt fitting together like matching pieces of a jigsaw. The next “match” comes with Joseph and Imhotep. Egyptian tradition tells us that two centuries or so after Menes there lived a great pharaoh named Djoser (“the Wise”), whose vizier, Imhotep, was regarded as the greatest of all Egyptian sages. Djoser and Imhotep, the legend says, lived during a famine lasting seven years, and it was a dream of the king’s that provided Imhotep with the clue to solving the crisis. Similarly, Hebrew history tells us that two centuries or so after Abraham there lived Joseph, the great seer and visionary, who became pharaoh’s vizier and helped solve the crisis of a seven-year famine by interpreting the king’s dreams.

Historians, of course, have long been aware of the striking resemblances between Imhotep and Joseph, and a great deal has been written on the subject. They would undoubtedly have realized the identity of the two men a long time ago, but the erroneous chronology, which separated them by over a thousand years, confused the issue.

The next “match” in the two histories comes of course with the Exodus, an event which we find has absolutely nothing to do with either the Eighteenth or Nineteenth Dynasties. Archeology tells us that sometime near the close of the Early Dynastic period, in the Third Dynasty, a great natural catastrophe, whose effects are still plainly visible, struck the entire Near East. This period of darkness, but also of invention and creativity, brought forth the distinctive “Pessimistic” literary genre of Egypt. Scribes of the time, most especially Ipuwer and Neferty, described the horrific events which left the country

kingless, huge numbers of people dead, cities flattened and the economy destroyed. The parallels between the events described in Exodus and those in the Pessimistic Texts have, of course, been noted by scholars. But once again, the connection was missed because conventional chronology decreed that the Egyptian documents predated the Exodus by many centuries.

In fact, both have been misplaced. The Exodus, as well as the disaster described in the Pessimistic Texts, actually occurred around 850 BC, some seven centuries after the “traditional” date of the Exodus.

In the years following this catastrophe, the Egyptians constructed their greatest monuments — the pyramids. These were erected in honor of the celestial deities whose awesome power had so recently been made manifest. Whilst the Egyptians erected the pyramids, the Hebrews were engaged in the Conquest of Canaan.

Having placed Moses and the Exodus in the ninth century BC, rather than the remote antiquity of the fifteenth, we might be more justified in taking seriously the biblical claim that there was a man called Moses and that it was he who composed the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Chapter 5, which examines the structure of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch, provides qualified support for such a belief. Here we discover that the books attributed to Moses are, as we would expect, heavily influenced by Egyptian custom, usage, and language. This is in total contrast to the later biblical books, where the Egyptian influence is much diminished. Thus it would appear that a genuine body of tradition, reaching back to the Exodus itself, formed the basis of the Pentateuch. Whether any of this material can be attributed to a man named “Moses” is beside the point: the Egyptian material is genuine.

As might be expected, the sources used in a study such as this are diverse in the extreme. I am particularly indebted to the Trojan work of scholars in many fields over the past century, and I have found publications such as Pritchard’s *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* and Breasted’s *Ancient Records* absolutely indispensable as sources of documentary material. The meticulous excavating, cataloguing and documenting carried out over the years by great figures such as Maspero, Brugsch, Schaeffer and Breasted has been most helpful, and their scrupulous honesty and attention to detail has provided invaluable assistance in the task of rectifying Egypt’s chaotic chronology.

However, as I have already made clear, it is to Immanuel Velikovsky that the present work owes most. Velikovsky's brilliant exposition of the contradictions inherent in ancient chronology is the key that has unlocked the secrets of antiquity. That his *Ages in Chaos* books failed to deliver a satisfactory reconstruction of history was in no way a major failing of his. He was a pioneer, and the constraints within which he worked made it virtually impossible for him to get everything right. As it was, a great deal of what he said was absolutely right and should have formed the cornerstone of any general reconstruction. Other scholars, profiting from Velikovsky's revolutionary insights, threw out all his historical work and constructed revised chronologies of their own, chronologies which repeated all the mistakes made by Velikovsky and added others which had previously not existed. These became yet more impediments to unraveling the truth.

Having said that, I am also indebted to those writers of the Velikovskian School who have carried on the work of reconstruction in a constructive way and have contributed so much to its completion. As I have said, Gunnar Heinsohn's insights are of key importance in this regard. His earliest papers, written during the 1980s, focused primarily on the social and economic development of Mesopotamia and provided important pointers to the way forward. In particular, at a time when errors had been identified in Velikovsky's methods and findings, and when many scholars both in America and Britain had begun to jettison the entire corpus of his work, Heinsohn as it were took up the torch of Velikovsky's radicalism and prevented what would perhaps have been the total loss of everything his predecessor had achieved. Heinsohn's first book, *Die Sumerer gab es nicht* (Frankfurt, 1988) demonstrated in a clear and concise way the need for a complete overhaul of our entire concept of the Early and Middle Bronze Ages. Here he proved that Mesopotamian history, properly speaking, did not begin until after the Ishtar Flood catastrophe (which he equated with Velikovsky's Venus catastrophe of c.1450 BC.). Utilizing the evidence of stratigraphy, Heinsohn demonstrated that the so-called Sumerians and Akkadians of the third millennium BC were alter-egos of the Chaldeans and Imperial Assyrians of the first millennium BC. This meant a shortening of all ancient Near Eastern history by a full two millennia and called for the reduction of Egyptian history by a commensurate span.

I differ from Heinsohn in a great many details, but to him goes the credit of being the first to identify the true scope of the problem facing ancient historians as well as pinpointing the source of the fictitious textbook system.

The limitations of a work such as this are obvious. Because of the wide scope of the evidence surveyed, and drawn as it is from many disciplines, only a small portion of what exists has been examined. Some subjects in the book could certainly have been examined in greater detail, though I am aware that this could have obscured the central argument and weakened its general impact. I concede that errors may have crept into the body of the book. In any work, mistakes are inevitable, and this is particularly so in an endeavor such as this. Nevertheless, I hold by the major conclusions reached and am very conscious that I have the full weight of ancient tradition on my side. The conventional history of Egypt is built, ultimately, on a mistaken application of biblical dates to Egyptian; the history that follows is, I contend, how that history would have been written had we not been misled all those centuries ago by Eusebius. It is basically a rediscovery of Egypt's history based upon the writings of the Egyptians themselves. The reader may judge for himself which of the two makes most sense.

CHAPTER I. THE DELUGE

LEGEND AND STRATIGRAPHY

Universally throughout the globe mankind's most ancient myths and legends speak of a great Deluge or Flood that sometime in the remote past devastated the earth, very nearly wiping out the human race. All versions of the story agree that there were but a handful of survivors. In some accounts these fled to the mountain-tops as the waters encroached; in others they constructed a ship or ark, wherein they sought refuge. Most versions hold that the disaster directly preceded the rise of civilization and put an end to a paradisial age of innocence.

Best known of mankind's Flood legends is of course the biblical story of Noah, a tale which combines most of the above elements.

Very similar to the story of Noah, and clearly originating in the same part of the world, were the various Mesopotamian Flood legends which began to come to the attention of the scholarly world shortly after Rawlinson and others succeeded in reading the cuneiform script early in the nineteenth century. In the event, no less than three separate accounts were identified. The Sumerian version, apparently the oldest, involved a hero named Ziusudra, who occurs as Xisuthros in the account given by Berossus. Two other versions, the Akkadian and the Old Babylonian, gave the names of the hero who survived the flood as Utnapishtim and Atrahasis. One of these in particular, the Akkadian story of Utnapishtim, displayed striking parallels with that of

Noah. Most of the incidents and motifs occurring in the latter also appear in the story of Utnapishtim. Like Noah, Utnapishtim was given a divine warning of the impending cataclysm, and like Noah he constructed a great ship in order to survive it. As with Noah, Utnapishtim brought various animals into his ark, and he was the sole survivor of all humanity. In one area, however, the two accounts differ. Unlike the biblical, the Mesopotamian flood stories are full of dramatic imagery. Take, for example, Utnapishtim's description of the event to Gilgamesh,

The Annunaki lifted up their torches;
setting the land ablaze with their flare;
Stunned shock over Adad's deeds overtook the heavens
And turned to blackness all that had been light.
The [...] land shattered like a [...] pot.
All day long the South Wind blew [...],
blowing fast, submerging the mountain in water,
overwhelming the people like an attack.
No one could see his fellow,
they could not recognize each other in the torrent.
The gods were frightened by the Flood,
Retreated, ascending to the heaven of Anu.
The gods were cowering like dogs, crouching by the outer wall.
Ishtar shrieked like a woman in childbirth,
The sweet-voiced Mistress of the Gods wailed:
'The olden days have alas turned to clay,
because I said evil things in the Assembly of the Gods!
How could I say evil things in the Assembly of the Gods,
Ordering a catastrophe to destroy my people?!
No sooner have I given birth to my dear people
Than they fill the sea like so many fish!
The gods — those of the Annunaki — were weeping with her,
The gods humbly sat weeping, sobbing with grief(?),
Their lips burning, parched with thirst.
Six days and seven nights
Came the wind and flood, the storm flattening the land.
When the seventh day arrived, the storm was pounding,

The flood was a war — struggling with
itself like a woman writhing (in labor).¹

Even as scholars compared the Hebrew and Sumerian Flood legends, similar stories from virtually every corner of the globe began to come to their attention. From China, for example, there was an account of a great Deluge during the time of Yao, the first emperor. Huge waves, it was said, engulfed most of the land in that epoch.² From the very opposite ends of the earth came similar legends. The Incas of Peru, for example, told of a time when the world went dark for nine days, at the end of which time people saw a light in the distance and heard a great roaring sound. As the light grew closer, they saw that it was the crest of a gigantic wave.³ The native peoples of North America, as well as Africa, Australia, Oceania and Asia, told almost identical tales.⁴ Europe has similar traditions. Irish legend spoke of a vast tidal wave from the ocean that had, in a remote age, exterminated the human population. The Lapps spoke of a time when Jubmel, the primary god, gathered the sea into a “towering wall” and sent it crashing over the land.⁵

When these accounts first came to the attention of European scholarship, it was automatically assumed that they referred to the same event described in the Book of Genesis. Students of natural history had already found manifold proofs of a dramatic destruction of life-forms at some epoch of the Stone Age. From the time of Georges Cuvier, the French founder of paleontology, it became clear that the earth had once harbored myriads of creatures no longer in existence. Some of these, such as the mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros, were closely related to modern species, and there seemed little doubt that the extinct animals had died in some great catastrophe. That at least was the opinion of Cuvier and most other natural historians of his epoch, the early and mid-nineteenth century. From the frozen wastelands of the north, from Siberia and Alaska, came reports of myriads of these creatures, their flesh perfectly preserved by the intense cold, but their bones smashed and limbs torn off. Often these beasts were found heaped on top of each other, in im-

1 M. G. Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Stanford, 1989) pp. 100f.

2 See “Emperor Yahoo” in Immanuel Velikovsky’s *Worlds in Collision* (1950) pp. 107-11.

3 Ibid. Throughout *Worlds in Collision*, Velikovsky speaks at length on the myths and legends of the New World, many of which were preserved in codices dating from the Spanish conquest.

4 Ibid.

5 Leonne de Cambrey, *Lapland Legends* (1926).

mense deposits, and their bodies intermingled with uprooted trees, boulders and gravel. From less remote lands too, such as Great Britain, came reports of sensational discoveries, of mountain caves filled with the shattered bones of myriads of bison, rhinoceros, elephant and hippopotamus. Only a vast and terrible flood, it was surmised, could have lifted herds of such animals, from such varied and remote environments, and thrown them into the deepest and most inaccessible reaches of Britain's cave systems.

We shall have more to say on this evidence towards the end of the present volume.

Cuvier himself, the chief proponent of the flood theory, was by no means a biblical scholar or in any way influenced by the Bible. Indeed, as a child of the Enlightenment he was, if anything, quite hostile to the Scriptures. Nevertheless, some other "catastrophists" of the time were far more favorably disposed towards the sacred writings and they attempted to link the geological evidence with the biblical account. In time, "Catastrophism" or the belief that great cataclysms of nature had fundamentally affected the course of earth's history, came to be linked, in part at least, with a biblical view of the past.

By the 1850s however a revolution in scientific thinking was under. After the acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection, there was a general movement away from a biblical world-view, or indeed a world-view that could be construed as in any way favorable to the Bible. Quite simply, the evolution controversy seemed to have thoroughly discredited the first part of the Bible in scholarly eyes. In addition, a group of scholars in Germany, most especially Karl Heinrich Graf, Albrecht Alt, Martin Noth and above all Julius Wellhausen (the so-called "Berlin School"), began to subject the Bible to critical examination, and to interpret Genesis in a way that had never been done before. The early patriarchs, it soon became clear, were not real people, but most probably humanized gods, whilst large parts of Genesis could only have been written in the seventh or sixth centuries BC — or even later — as they contained ideas, symbols and technologies that were unknown before that time.⁶ Thus it was that the German critics, together with the Darwinian natural historians, put paid by the end of the nineteenth century to the idea of a world-wide Flood.

⁶ See, e.g., Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin, 1883).

But if no such event occurred, this raised the problem of explaining it and, even more worryingly, explaining the similar traditions found throughout the world. This was by no means an easy task, because it meant too the reinterpretation of the geological and paleontological evidence which Cuvier and his associates had identified. The literary material was eventually “explained away” as exaggerated memories of local events which early man, in his ignorance, had imagined had engulfed the entire earth. The paleontological and geological evidence was not so easy to deal with, though in time a novel expedient was employed: it was decided that mass extinctions, for example, were a “mystery” which future research would undoubtedly solve.

This has been the scholarly consensus since the beginning of the twentieth century, yet it is a consensus never shared by the “man in the street” and it is one which continually has had to explain disturbing evidence which repeatedly brought the Flood story back to the public eye.

In 1922 an Englishman named Leonard Woolley began what was to become one of the most celebrated archeological digs of all time. The site he chose was Ur, an ancient Sumerian port named in the Bible as the home of Abraham, father of the Jewish nation. Digging down through the various levels of Bronze and Iron Age occupation and making some spectacular discoveries on the way, his work shed new and fascinating light on the brilliant and hitherto almost unsuspected civilization of ancient Sumeria. It was only when he went below the Bronze Age, however, that his most astonishing discovery came to light. At the bottom of the earliest level associated with a metal-using civilization, Woolley came to a deep stratum of what appeared to be virgin clay. However, about three meters further down, the workmen again came upon evidence of human occupation. It was only then that Woolley realized the significance of the clay stratum: the clay was actually silt, waterborne silt — unequivocal evidence of a great flood.⁷⁶

News that Woolley had discovered the Flood of Noah was flashed round the globe and caused great excitement at the time. In the years that followed, efforts were made to discover evidence of this Deluge in other parts of Mesopotamia and further afield. If this was indeed the event described so vividly in the Book of Genesis, then it should surely have left its mark throughout Mesopotamia and far beyond. But whilst clear signs of the flood of Ur

⁷⁶ Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees* (Pelican edition, 1950) p. 21.

could indeed be found throughout Iraq, no evidence of such an event, it was claimed, could be found beyond the Land of the Two Rivers. Eventually all talk of the Flood of Noah was discarded, and the Ur event was explained as a localized disaster caused by unusually heavy rainfall in the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

There the matter rested for many years, though indeed one or two dissenting voices were heard from time to time. It was pointed out, for example, that a silt deposit of three meters indicated flood waters of considerable depth, whilst the cultural discontinuity observed before and after the flood stratum hinted at a catastrophe of considerably greater magnitude than anything a river-flood could produce. (Actually, above the three meters of heavy clay there was a further five-meter layer of "debris", a layer apparently not deposited by humans and showing every sign of being a stratified layer of lighter material left by the same flood, thus indicating a total flood deposit of eight meters, or twenty-five feet). Nevertheless, in spite of such factors, the Flood of Ur was decreed to be local to Mesopotamia. No evidence of a contemporary event outside the area, it was claimed, could be found.

Yet evidence of great cataclysms, of both fire and water, existed in abundance in other regions. This material, had it been properly examined, would have solved the mystery of the Deluge once and for all.

THE VIOLENCE OF NATURE IN A BYGONE AGE

Even as Leonard Woolley completed his excavations at Ur, archeologists were discovering evidence of cataclysmic destruction in ancient times in site after site throughout the Near East. These destructions were often wrought by water, but also displayed the marks of earthquake and fire. Claude Schaeffer, for example, whose tireless work throughout the Near East made him one of the greatest authorities of his day on the archeology of the early civilizations, made it quite plain that he regarded the demise of the Stone, Copper and Bronze epochs as being the direct consequence of great upheavals of nature. Schaeffer's definitive work, *Stratigraphie comparée et Chronologie de l'Asie occidentale*, published in 1948, presented to the world the conclusions of a lifetime of excavation, cataloguing and research. Looking in detail at the a number of very ancient sites in Anatolia, Syria, Palestine and

Iran, he noted that in all these places human habitation had been repeatedly disrupted throughout the Bronze Ages.⁸ In particular, he noted that the so-called Early Bronze (or more accurately Copper) Age settlements were always terminated by some form of catastrophic destruction, the agents of which were normally flood, earthquake and fire.⁹ This destruction was by far the most violent of those identified by Schaeffer, and we shall have occasion to return to it at a later point.

Schaeffer did perhaps his most memorable work at Ugarit, the famous port in northern Syria. Here he noted that “the most ancient tombs of settlement 2 or Middle Ugarit 1 rest on a bed of shattered bricks covering a great accumulation of ashes, witness to a vast fire which had ravaged Early Ugarit 2.”¹⁰ He noted, however, that “The fire of Early Ugarit 2 is ... more than an episode of local history.”¹¹ Ugarit’s fate, he observed, was shared by settlements throughout Anatolia. At Tarsus, for example, a “brilliant” third-millennium culture was “destroyed by fire”, whilst at Alaca Hüyük, Troy, and Alishar Hüyük, there were signs of a “general disturbance” which touched “vast areas”.

Schaeffer eventually came to the conclusion that in all, six great catastrophes had at different epochs struck the entire Near East. The first of these, and also by far the most violent, terminated the Early Bronze 2 epoch in Syria/Palestine.¹²

Since the publication of *Stratigraphie comparée* the evidence for these repeated catastrophes has grown more and more comprehensive. Orthodox scholarship, as enshrined for example in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, has by and large been compelled to accept the reality of these events. Thus we find J. Mellaart noting that Chalcolithic (Copper Age) Troy I was destroyed in a “violent upheaval”¹³ and that “the burning of Emporio, the destruction of Thermi, Bayrakli, Helvaciköy-Hüyücek, Bozköy-Hüyücek, and every other Troy I site on the Aegean coast between Edremit and the Karaburun pen-

8 “Les grandes perturbations ayant laissé leurs traces dans la stratigraphie des principaux sites du Bronze de l’Asie Occidentale sont au nombre de six. La plus ancienne d’entre elles a secoué entre 2400 et 2300 l’ensemble des pays s’étendant depuis le Caucase au Nord jusqu’à la vallée du Nil.” *Stratigraphie comparée et Chronologie de l’Asie Occidentale, 2^{me} et 3^{me} millénaires* (Oxford, 1948) p. 563.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 33.

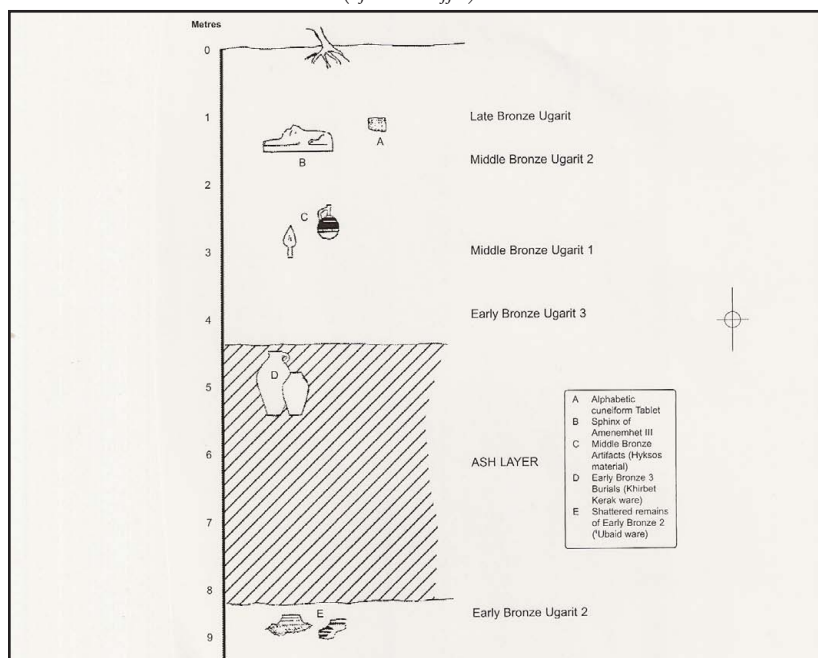
11 Ibid., p. 36.

12 Ibid.

13 J. Mellaart, “Anatolia: c.4000-2300 BC,” in *CAH* Vol.2 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 383.

insula, in the Caicus valley and the islands, suggests a catastrophe of some magnitude.¹⁴

FIGURE 1. STRATIGRAPHY OF UGARIT
(after Schaeffer)



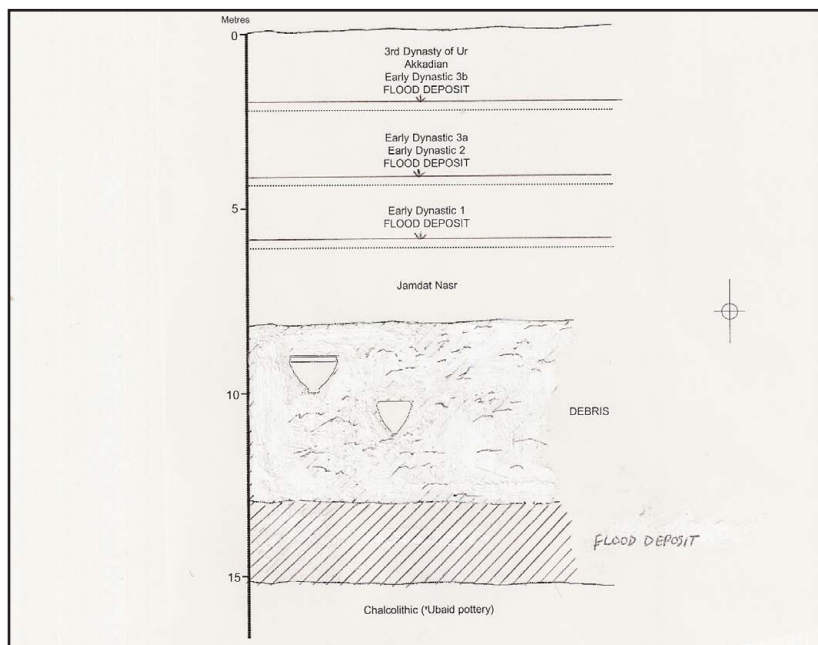
The cataclysms described so vividly both in Genesis and other ancient traditions have apparently left their mark very clearly in the archeological record. It is untrue to say that they were localized events. At the end of *Stratigraphie comparée*, Schaeffer considered all the evidence, including clear proof of similar disasters in areas much further afield than those he had personally visited and came to the conclusion that these upheavals were world-wide events, universal in the sense that they had simultaneously touched every part of the globe.¹⁵ But if such be the case, which of these cataclysms was contemporary with the Flood of Ur, and how is it that it was never recognized as such?

The answer to that question lies in the contradictory and inconsistent dating techniques and stratigraphic terminologies employed by archeologists in the various regions of the Near East.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Schaeffer loc. cit.

FIGURE 2. STRATIGRAPHY OF UR
(after Woolley, 1950)



We recall at this point how Schaeffer discovered evidence of what he described as a vast conflagration at Ugarit in northern Syria. The Ugarit catastrophe left a layer of what appeared to be calcined or hardened ash almost four meters in depth, and it destroyed a settlement identified by Schaeffer as belonging to the Syrian Early Bronze 2. Neither Schaeffer himself, nor anyone else for that matter, could have been expected to see the fire of Ugarit as contemporary with the flood of Ur. Apart from the fact that the agents of destruction were apparently very different, the chronology also disagreed. After all, according to Woolley, the Flood of Ur had destroyed an early Chalcolithic (Copper Age) settlement dated to circa 3300 BC, whereas the fire of Ugarit had destroyed a settlement which had already reached a fairly advanced state of the Early Bronze Age and was dated to circa 2300 BC.

Clearly then, the vast destruction observed by Schaeffer and others throughout Syria/Palestine and Anatolia could not be made to tie in with the great flood observed by Woolley in Mesopotamia. Such has remained

the accepted wisdom for many years. However, there were always a great many clues that should have alerted scholars to the possibility that that view could be wrong. For in spite of the divergent terminologies, the pre-fire culture of Ugarit (Syrian E.B. 2) matches very closely the pre-flood culture of Ur (Mesopotamian Chalcolithic), whilst the post-catastrophe cultures of the two cities also match in detail. Most illuminating is the change in pottery styles. The pre-conflagration town of Ugarit employed 'Ubaid-type pottery of almost exactly the same kind as that used in pre-flood Ur. Similarly the immediate aftermath of the Ugarit fire saw the introduction of a new culture employing distinctive wheel-made pottery named Khirbet-Kerak. But the Khirbet-Kerak culture closely parallels the Jamdat Naşr culture of post-flood Mesopotamia. Again, pre-conflagration Ugarit was entirely illiterate, with early hieroglyphs only appearing afterwards — a situation precisely reflecting that of pre- and post-Flood Mesopotamia.

We could go on and on almost *ad infinitum* comparing the two stratigraphies, but the table below should illustrate the main points.

UGARIT	UR
Middle Bronze 2 (Hyksos) c. 1600 BC	Early Bronze 3 (Akkadian) c. 2300 BC
Middle Bronze 1	Early Bronze 2 (Early Dynastic 2 and 3)
Early Bronze-Middle Bronze (transitional)	Early Bronze 1 (Early Dynastic 1)
Early Bronze 3 (Khirbet Kerak) c. 2200 BC.	Jamdat Naşr (close parallels with Khirbet Kerak) c. 3200 BC.
GREAT FIRE (leaving four meters of hardened "ash")	GREAT FLOOD (leaving three meters of silt)
Early Bronze 2 ('Ubaid) c. 2400 BC	Chalcolithic ('Ubaid) c. 3300 BC

Apart from showing why no evidence for Woolley's Flood could be discovered outside of Mesopotamia, the above table also helps to illustrate the need for a radical redating of absolute chronology. As we see, the compared stratigraphies reveal an enormous chronological discrepancy. Because archeologists still assume that the terms Early Bronze and Middle Bronze mean more or less the same thing in Syria and Mesopotamia, the Early Bronze 2 culture of Ugarit is dated to the same period (c. 2400 BC.) as the Sumerian Early Bronze 2 culture in Mesopotamia. Yet the table shows very clearly

that the terms Early and Middle Bronze *do not* mean the same thing in the two regions. Entirely different systems of classification are followed, two systems out of synchronization by between seven hundred and a thousand years. Thus we see that the Hyksos, who are generally dated to circa 1600 BC, were actually contemporary with the Mesopotamian Akkadians, who are generally dated around 2300 BC.

We shall presently return to this whole question, where we will find that the evidence requires a dramatic shortening of the whole of ancient chronology.

It is clear then that the Flood of Ur was an event of much greater magnitude than is now generally admitted, and that its effects were felt at least as far away as northern Syria — a region separated from Lower Mesopotamia by almost 1500 miles and a substantial mountain range. The true extent of this cataclysm was disguised by the conflicting dating-systems employed by the archeologists in the various regions. However, as we shall now see, these inconsistencies followed a definite pattern, and were themselves but a reflection of confused and conflicting historiographies which formed round the great nations of the area, the Egyptians and Mesopotamians.

ANCIENT HISTORY IN CHAOS

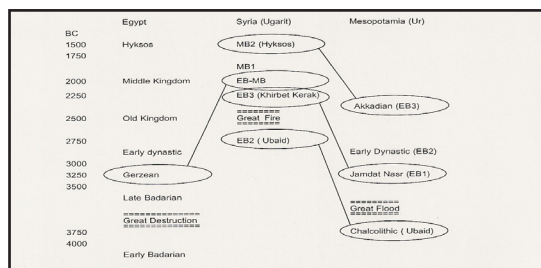
It is often stated that the Egyptians did not have a Flood story, and yet "... the phrase 'great flood' appears several times in the Pyramid Texts and it is quite distinct from the standard phrase for the annual inundation; usually it forms part of the longer phrase 'the great flood which came forth from the great lady, Heaven.'¹⁶ Furthermore, Manetho, although writing in Greek, was an Egyptian, and he refers to the first three dynasties of pharaohs as "kings who reigned after the Flood." Again, Egyptian cosmology spoke of a "watery abyss" which had existed before the act of creation and before the emergence of the first land, the primeval hill, or Nun. This is suggestive, as it also is in Genesis, of an ancestral memory of a world-engulfing inundation. In addition, we need remember that the Egyptians had a legend of World Destruction which, though not specifically speaking of a flooded world, strongly hints at it. This told how the god Ra, tiring of the wickedness of mankind, sent out his eye, in the form of the goddess Hathor, to punish the

¹⁶ William Mullen, "Myth and the Science of Catastrophism: A Reading of the Pyramid Texts," *Pensée*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1973).

human race mercilessly. Before she could complete the job however Ra repented of his actions, and, in order to save a remnant of humanity, made Hathor drunk with vast quantities of beer, which he dyed red to resemble the blood of millions of people. The ruse worked, and Hathor desisted from her work of destruction.

This story, like all the others, is dismissed as pure fantasy, and no evidence of any disaster upon which it could have been based is believed to exist in Egypt. Nevertheless, some form of cataclysmic destruction, the evidence of which is regularly found throughout the region, did hit the Nile Valley in primeval times. Seaborne gravel, for example, occurs throughout Egypt, sometimes at a considerable elevation above sea level. In Flinders Petrie's words, "The changes of sea-level, which occur alike all along the Mediterranean, formed an estuary up the valley to beyond Thebes. This filled up the whole valley with debris to the level of the plateau, leaving gravels on the top of present cliffs."¹⁷

FIGURE 3. CHRONOLOGICAL INCONSISTENCIES IN THE STRATIGRAPHIES OF EGYPT, SYRIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA



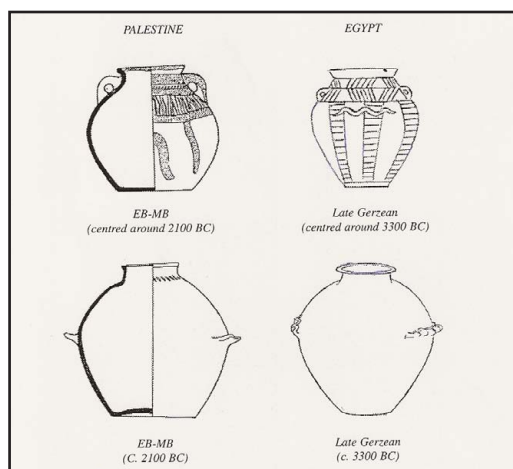
The stratigraphy of the pre-dynastic period reveals further clues. Petrie for example noted that the Badarian (Neolithic) epoch in Egypt seemed to be split into two distinct periods by some form of major natural disturbance. This event left a substantial layer of debris between the Early and Late Badarian strata.¹⁸

17 F. Petrie, *The Making of Egypt* (London, 1939) p. 1.

18 Ibid. p. 7. "That the Badarian age was a long period is shown by there being a thick bed of rock debris cemented together in the middle of the deposits, which seem indistinguishable in style above and below the interval."

Petrie's major work in Egypt was completed well before Woolley began his explorations in Mesopotamia. He did not regard the debris layer in Egypt as being the result of a flood, nor indeed did he make any attempt to explain its presence. Such being the case, it was unlikely that any attempt to equate the Mesopotamian Flood with the destruction observed in the Nile Valley would be made. Nevertheless, close examination of the evidence would have revealed that the two events were very nearly, if not precisely, simultaneous. Egyptian archeology, unlike that of Syria/Palestine, is (at least in this early stage) closely aligned to that of Mesopotamia. Thus the beginnings of literate civilization in the two regions is recognized as being more or less contemporary, whilst both areas have an Early Dynastic period that can be shown to belong in the same era. Comparisons between the stratigraphies and cultures of Egypt, Syria/Palestine and Mesopotamia will in fact reveal a striking point: the archeologies of Egypt and Mesopotamia are in agreement with each other, but both are seven centuries to a millennium ahead of that of Syria/Palestine. We have already observed this discrepancy with regard to the archeology of Syria/Palestine and Mesopotamia. Its occurrence in Egypt too reveals how the historiographies of all three regions are tied together in an inseparable web of confusion.

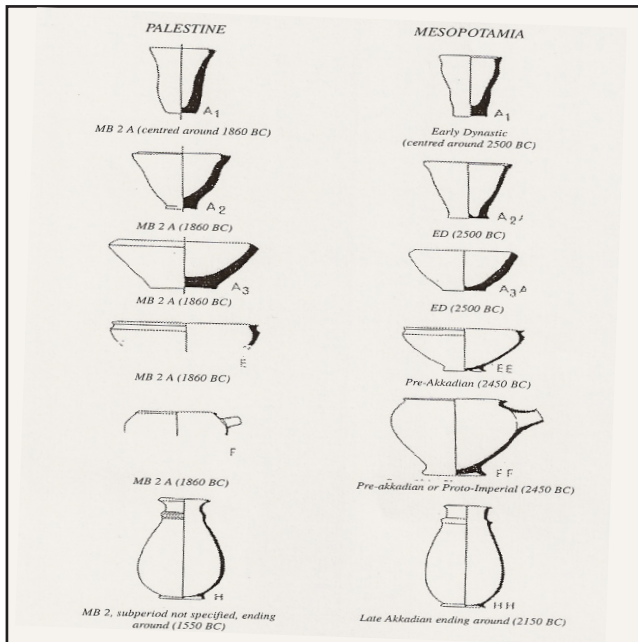
FIGURE 4. CHRONOLOGICAL INCONSISTENCIES IN THE POTTERY SEQUENCE OF EGYPT, SYRIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA



Note: Pottery parallels between Protodynastic Egypt and Early Bronze—Middle Bronze Palestine (Palestinian pottery from KM Kenyon in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., vol. I, part 2, p. 573; Egyptian pottery from F. Petrie, *The Making of Egypt* (1939)).

The destruction layer noted by Petrie in Egypt, which separated the Early and Late Badarian epochs, is now generally dated sometime in the fourth millennium BC — usually in the early fourth millennium. This is very close to the date assigned to the Flood stratum in Mesopotamia. Immediately after the Badarian Age, Egypt quickly progresses to the Naqada I and then Naqada II (or Gerzean) culture. Now the Naqada II culture, which in Egypt is termed Chalcolithic and is dated to the mid- or latter fourth millennium, displays striking parallels with the Palestinian Early Bronze 3 culture, which is there dated to the latter third millennium — a disagreement of a thousand years!

FIGURE 5. CHRONOLOGICAL INCONSISTENCIES IN THE POTTERY SEQUENCE OF MESOPOTAMIA AND PALESTINE



Note: Pottery parallels between Palestine and Mesopotamia
(from J. Kaplan, 1971, pp 298 / 300 / 301).

The table illustrates the point. It is clear that our Flood stratum of Mesopotamia occurs universally throughout the Near East. It is untrue to say that it was a local event. But if the disaster touched areas as far apart as Egypt and Mesopotamia it can only have been part of a much greater event, a general

cataclysm that touched vast areas, perhaps even the entire globe. Indeed, a Flood of the whole earth, as depicted in all ancient mythologies, is implied. What could have been the cause of such a universal upheaval is a question that has to be faced. To recap then, we have found that the confusion of terminologies and dating systems has had far-reaching consequences. Not only has it bequeathed to us a distorted picture of natural history by disguising the reality of the event known to legend as the Deluge; it has also left us with an utterly chaotic and grotesquely distorted view of ancient human history. Nations and kingdoms which should be placed alongside each other are actually found, in the textbooks, centuries apart. Thus the history of Israel, whose archeology is tied up with that of Syria, can in no way be made to reconcile with that of Egypt, in spite of the fact that Israel is Egypt's closest neighbor and the two countries were, in the testimony of Hebrew tradition, in regular contact for many centuries. However, as soon as we realize that Israel's history, tied as it is to its archeology, is centuries behind that of Egypt, the two discordant histories will be seen to agree, and agree in a most spectacular manner.

It shall be our task in the remainder of this volume to show how the histories of Israel and Egypt parallel each other, and how the great characters and events of Hebrew tradition whose lives touched on Egypt were indeed remembered by the Egyptians.

POLE SHIFTS AND CLIMATE PLUNGES

The catastrophic destructions indicated in the stratigraphies of Near Eastern sites had a major impact on the climate. Indeed it is well-known that the climate of the ancient Near East changed dramatically at the end of the Early Dynastic epoch, and it would appear that there were frequent and destructive alterations in climate right throughout and immediately preceding that era. This is demonstrated in numerous and often very obvious ways. It is known, for example, that during this epoch the Sahara was not a desert, but an enormous grassland supporting fauna typical of the African savannah. Throughout Egypt and right across the whole of what is now the Sahara, vast numbers of rock-paintings and etchings show men, usually armed with bows, hunting various of these creatures, such as gazelle and ostrich. In fact, almost every animal of the African savannah occurs. In the midst of what

is now sand and rock strewn wastelands, we find portrayals of elephants, rhino, lions, wildebeest and giraffe, to name but a few.

These etchings and paintings are known to be contemporaneous with Egypt's protodynastic and Early Dynastic epoch. Thus we find, in the rock-art of Egypt's eastern desert, around the Wadi Hammamat and other places, symbols and iconography associated in the Nile Valley with the "Followers of Horus", who were closely associated with the kings of the First Dynasty. David Rohl has recently conducted a fairly exhaustive examination of this work, and has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt the connection between these folk and the Early Dynastic Egyptians.¹⁹

The climate change which made almost the whole of northern Africa into one of the most arid regions on earth occurred, I will argue, in several stages from the beginning of the First Dynasty through to the end of the Third.²⁰ The climatic perturbations of this period, we shall see, left their mark in the archeological record not only of Egypt, but of the whole Near East. The evidence is found in Syria/Palestine as much as anywhere else. From what we have seen earlier, we would expect the strata in Syria/Palestine termed Early Bronze 3 and Middle Bronze 1 to be contemporary with Egypt's and Mesopotamia's Early Dynastic Age. Thus we should expect to find very clear evidence of climate disturbance in Early Bronze 3 and/or Middle Bronze 1 Palestine/Syria. Sure enough, disturbance there was. We are told that at the end of Early Bronze 3 there was "a complete and absolute break in Palestinian civilization."²¹ This "break" was marked by the total destruction of all the inhabited sites in Palestine and Syria, and was accompanied by momentous climatic changes. We hear of an "absolute environmental break" with signs of a "lowering of the water-table [i.e. desertification], which in turn is associated with deforestation and erosion."²² These are the words of Kathleen

19 David Rohl, *Legend: The Origins of Civilisation* (London, 1998).

20 "Between the First and Fourth Dynasties, the second and major faunal break, characterised by the disappearance of the rhinoceros, elephant, giraffe, and gerenuk gazelle in Egypt, culminated in the modern aridity ..." K. W. Butzer, "Physical Conditions in Eastern Europe, Western Asia and Egypt Before the Period of Agricultural and Urban Settlement," in *CAH* Vol.1 part 1 (3rd ed.) p. 68.

21 K.M. Kenyon, "Syria and Palestine c.2160-1780 BC: The Archeological Sites," in *CAH* Vol.1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 567.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 574. In Egypt too there is very real evidence in the ground of this great dessication. "The roots of acacias, tamarisks (?) and sycamores have been found in the low desert, well beyond the range of flood-waters or riverine ground water between Khawalid and deir Tasa, and also at Armant. These are dated between the Badarian Period and the Fourth Dynasty." See also Butzer, loc. cit. p. 67.

Kenyon, one of the most respected Near Eastern archeologists of the twentieth century. Yet although a catastrophic change in climate is unequivocally indicated by the evidence, archeologists discuss the issue only with the greatest reluctance. For no mechanism, it is said, is known by which such an immense disturbance in the climate could have been effected.

Archeologists tend only to comment upon the particular region or locality where they have experience and expertise. Nevertheless, they admit, in somewhat hushed tones, that these climate disturbances were by no means confined to one locality. These events were universal, as the utter devastation of the Saharan grasslands makes only too evident.

Over the past decade much debate has centered round the age of the Great Sphinx at Giza. To the annoyance (and consternation) of the academic establishment, a series of highly respected geologists and climatologists have nailed their colors to the mast in insisting that the Sphinx displays upon its back clear signs of water erosion.²³ It is unfortunate that the waters of the debate have been muddied by some of the outlandish claims made by writers who have seized upon this knowledge to claim that the Sphinx is a relic of a long-dead civilization, and that the water-erosion proves it to be 10,000 years old.²⁴ Nevertheless, one point made by some of them is worthy of serious consideration. The head of the Sphinx, which displays little or no erosion, appears in a very small scale, completely out of proportion to the rest of the body. The writers who suggested that the original head was recarved in the Fourth Dynasty, in the likeness of the reigning pharaoh, were probably correct.

Giza was a spot of immense sacredness and importance right from the beginning of the First Dynasty. Here was located the shrine of the *benben*, the sacred rock that fell from heaven, which was associated with the primeval hill, the Nun. Much evidence of cult activity from Dynasties 1 and 2, including several key finds, has been discovered at Giza. In this regard we may note the large mastaba tomb, "Giza V", probably dating from the reign of King Djef, and surrounded by the graves of 56 retainers, as well as the name

23 Most famous in this regard is Professor Robert Schoch, a geologist of Boston University. Asked by John Anthony West to examine the erosion marks on the Sphinx, Professor Schoch expected to be able to issue a refutation, but was shocked to discover the opposite. His assertion that there are clear signs of water-erosion on the Sphinx has proved a major embarrassment to conventional scholarship for over a decade now.

24 See, e.g., as one of a numerous *genre*, Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval, *Keeper of Genesis* (London, 1996).

of the Second Dynasty ruler Nyentjer, found on jar sealings in a tomb to the south of the main necropolis.²⁵ Objects bearing the names of Aha and Den (Dynasty 1) have been found at Abu Roash, just a short distance from Giza, whilst archaic-style animal scenes on Khufu's causeway and the use of "palace façade" designs elsewhere at Giza seem to reflect the influence of designs used at Mastaba V and other Early Dynastic structures. In view of Giza's association with the cult of the Benben, it is quite probable that in Early Dynastic times the site was the location of a sacred mound such as existed at Hierakonpolis. The Sphinx almost certainly dates from the same period. I would suggest that originally the head was in the likeness of the lioness-goddess Sekhmet, who (often shown with serpent-like elongated neck) was of immense importance during the First Dynasty. By the end of Dynasty 3, the head was probably badly eroded by water and unrecognizable. It was therefore recarved in anthropomorphic form, in the likeness of the reigning pharaoh (possibly Chephren). In the bone-dry climate of Egypt that has existed since then, little or no further erosion has occurred.

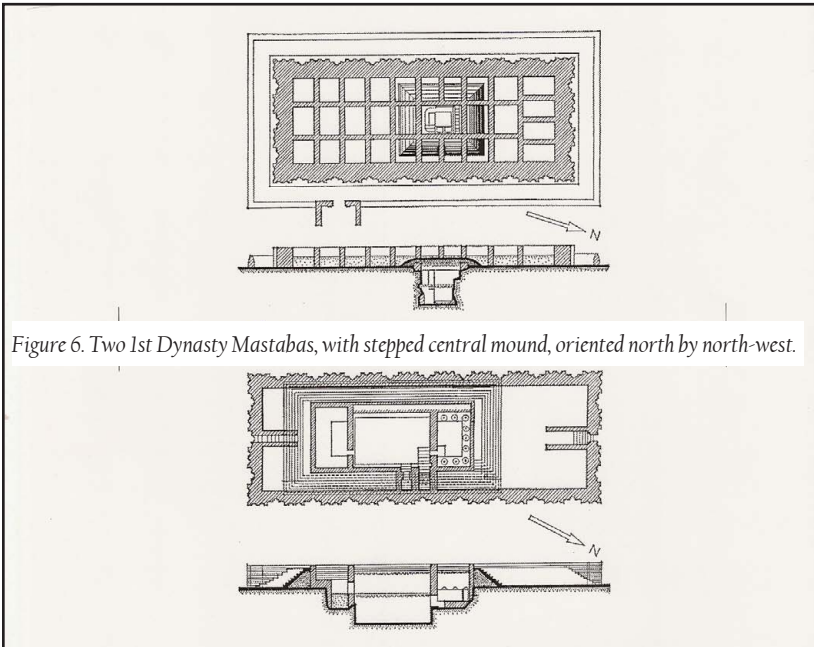
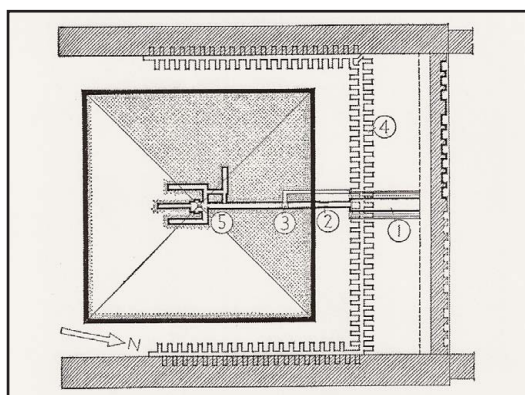


Figure 6. Two 1st Dynasty Mastabas, with stepped central mound, oriented north by north-west.

25 I. Shaw and P. Nicholson, *British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1995) pp. 109-10.

Sekhmet was the original sphinx-goddess, a goddess who personified the destructive power of the celestial deities, a power more commonly linked to Apop, the Cosmic Serpent (hence also her serpentine neck in early portrayals). Human sacrifices, it seems, were originally offered to the Giza Sphinx, a circumstance which probably finds an echo in the Greek legend of Oedipus, where the female sphinx devours those unable to answer her riddle.

FIGURE 7. PYRAMID OF SEKHEMKHERT, DYNASTY 3,
ORIENTED NORTH BY NORTH-WEST.



Because the Early Dynastic epoch is conventionally located in the 4th/3rd millennium BC, most authorities place these climate alterations at that time. Yet we have seen that something is seriously amiss with regard to the chronologies and dating systems of the region. Similar climatic disturbances are noted outside the Near East, but here they are placed centuries later. In fact, the evidence shows that something of truly cosmic dimensions repeatedly plunged the climate of the entire planet into chaos between the fourteenth and eighth centuries BC. This was a phenomenon demonstrated in great detail by Immanuel Velikovsky (of whom more will be heard presently).²⁶ In Europe, for example, there was a dramatic *klimaturz*, or “climate plunge” at this time. Temperatures dropped by up to three degrees Celsius. Tree-lines retreated down mountainsides in the Alps, whilst in other areas oak forests were replaced by peat bogs. These changes were accompanied by massive seismic activity. The Bronze Age Lake Dwellings of central Europe were

26 I. Velikovsky, *Earth in Upheaval* (1955).

overwhelmed by massive inundations of water, as lake shorelines were suddenly and violently tilted.

Yet the true magnitude of what occurred is perhaps illustrated by another piece of evidence from Egypt. The Egyptians, we know, regarded the northern cardinal point as of immense religious significance. In the great age of pyramid-building, during the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, pyramids and temples are oriented very precisely with true north. The soul of the pharaoh had to ascend in that direction to attain immortality amongst the “imperishable” circumpolar stars. (A “stairway to heaven” or Tower leading to heaven, was believed by all ancient peoples to be located at the Pole). The astonishing fact however is that the pyramids and mastabas of the Early Dynastic age are not oriented towards the north, but towards a direction roughly corresponding to north by north-west, an alignment which is, as far as Egyptologists know, completely meaningless. Yet the alignment is not random; all the Early Dynastic monuments point in almost precisely the same NNW direction. (Slight variations might be explained by the violent seismic activity that terminated the epoch). So the evidence would suggest, incredible as it might seem, that during the Early Dynastic Age, up until the end of Dynasty 3, the poles did not occupy their present positions!

The positions of the poles have, of course, changed repeatedly during the course of the earth’s history. The magnetic poles move constantly and rather quickly. We should note, too, that the earth also “wobbles” slightly as it spins, so that over the centuries the position of the poles changes in relation to the fixed stars. Yet the Egyptians did not align monuments to the magnetic poles, nor to the fixed stars, but to the real axial poles round which our planet revolves. These too change, but that change is normally believed to take vast stretches of time as the drift of the continental plates alters the earth’s topography. We know that since the erection of the Great Pyramid at least, virtually no such movement has taken place, for this tumulus is still aligned rather precisely to the present cardinal points. Yet between the end of the Third Dynasty and the beginning of the Fourth, during which the Giza Pyramids were raised, a relatively sudden and substantial shift seems to have occurred.

The explanation for such a sensational fact lies outside the scope of a history book, yet it is evident that the controversial hypothesis of Immanu-

el Velikovsky, who looked to the skies for answers, and particularly to the members of the solar system, is one that needs to be seriously examined.

A CATASTROPHIST PERSPECTIVE

From what has been said thus far, it should be apparent that the natural catastrophes which ended the Neolithic and Copper Ages throughout the Near East can only have been part of a wider and more general upheaval of nature. We have already hinted as much when we suggested that these events were linked in ancient legend to strange events in the skies and were believed to have been sent by the planetary deities. Unusual phenomena affecting the members of the Solar System were recorded in many of mankind's primeval legends.

This of course goes entirely against the grain of contemporary orthodox opinion. According to the theories accepted in virtually all the relevant natural sciences, no such events could possibly have occurred at such a recent point in history. It is believed that the various members of the Solar System have maintained their present courses for perhaps thousands of millions of years. To suggest that the movements of the planets deviated from the norm only a few thousand years ago is nothing short of outrageous. Yet this was precisely the opinion held by Immanuel Velikovsky.

When Velikovsky published his *Worlds in Collision* in 1950, it precipitated a scholarly controversy unheard of since the battle over evolution in the nineteenth century. As the title of the book suggested, Velikovsky held that at various periods in the geologically recent past, cosmic bodies, and event planets, had come near to colliding with our own planet, with devastating results. *Worlds in Collision* dealt chiefly with the final two series of these disasters, which Velikovsky synchronized with the Exodus from Egypt and with the destruction of Sennacherib's army outside Jerusalem some 750 years later. Each close encounter between the earth and the other cosmic body, he claimed, caused our planet to be shaken from its very axis. The earth's solar orbit, as well as the length of the year, was altered, whilst tremendous seismic disturbances seized the globe. Thousands of volcanoes burst into activity, and the skies were darkened. Tremendous tidal waves swept the continents, wiping out whole species and civilizations. Showers of meteorites and electrical discharges bombarded the earth.

These were the events, according to Velikovsky, which left their unmistakable mark in the violent destruction of the ancient settlements of the first and second millennia BC.

Velikovsky held that the theogonies of ancient peoples, which told of the birth of planets, and which regarded the planets as gods, were not mere allegory, as the prevailing doctrine now insists. On the contrary, he said, the ancients had observed the birth and death of planets, recording also the devastating effects that these wars in the heavens had on the earth. It was because of this that the planets were held to be gods and sacrifices offered them.

According to Velikovsky, the fifteenth-century catastrophes were linked with a great comet, known to the ancients by various names, but especially linked to the cosmic serpent or dragon monster, which had erupted in a tremendous explosion from the planet Jupiter. As proof of this he cites evidence of various kinds, both from the natural and human sciences. All ancient peoples, he said, seemed to have regarded the planet Jupiter as the father of the gods. We now know that Jupiter is the largest planet in the Solar System. But how could the ancient astronomers have known this — or how could they have given primacy in the planetary system to Jupiter? Even if they (as now seems to be the case) possessed some form of magnifying glasses or crystals, they would still have had no inkling of Jupiter's true size, for through a telescope the planet looks no bigger than Mars. When Velikovsky presented this question to Einstein, the great physicist, who had hitherto regarded Velikovsky's theories as nonsense, began to look seriously at the whole scenario.

According to early legends, the "sky father" Jupiter had decided to chastise the human race for its incorrigible wickedness. In some accounts, the great god/planet then gave birth to a new god, or new star, who was to carry out the punishment. In Greek mythology the task was assigned to Athena, who sprang fully armed from the head of Zeus (Jupiter) with a mighty roar. In Egyptian mythology the goddess assigned to the task was named Neith or Hathor, whose slaughter of humanity we have already mentioned. Another name for the avenging deity was Typhon, and the Roman writer Pliny, who had access to volumes of Greek, Egyptian and Babylonian literature that are now lost, describes Typhon as an enormous blood-red comet that had brought the earth to the brink of destruction.²⁷ Velikovsky demonstrated

²⁷ Pliny, *Natural History*, ii, 23.

in great detail the link between Typhon and the goddess known as Venus/Ishtar/Isis/Athena/Hathor, all of whom were linked either to a World Destruction or to the great Deluge itself.

Velikovsky's death in 1979 did not put an end to his ideas (though the academic establishment may have fervently wished it had). On the contrary, there has been a veritable renaissance in the whole concept of catastrophism. New researchers have appeared to carry forward the work. It is now freely admitted, for example, that the Cretaceous dinosaurs were exterminated in some form of cataclysm involving a comet or asteroid impact. Such talk would have been unthinkable in Velikovsky's lifetime. Much work too has gone into elucidating more recent ages. In particular, the researches of Professor Gunnar Heinsohn in the field of Mesopotamian archeology have in a sense taken Velikovsky's ideas to their logical conclusion. Velikovsky dated the Deluge described in the Book of Genesis according to the chronology of Genesis, and therefore placed it around 2500 BC. He did not connect this catastrophe with the event described in Mesopotamian sources, which are there attributed to Venus/Ishtar. Yet Heinsohn has proved the two to be identical. He has thus placed Noah's (and Utnapishtim's) Deluge in the thirteenth or fourteenth century (roughly the biblical date of Exodus) and brings the Exodus itself down to the 8th or even 7th century.

The present writer holds with Heinsohn's analysis, and therefore equates the Flood stratum of Ur with the Venus/Ishtar cataclysm, an event that must be dated to the fourteenth century BC or even later.

In fact, the Venus/Ishtar catastrophe of the fourteenth century was the event which triggered the appearance of literate civilization.²⁸ The traumatized survivors of the catastrophe, a small remnant of humanity, reacted to the terrifying events they had been witness to by offering propitiatory sacrifices to the vengeful sky-gods who had wrought the destruction. These sacrifices, usually involving human victims, were offered on the mountain-tops to which the survivors had fled before the onrushing tidal waves. When people again ventured onto the low-lying plains they raised artificial hills upon which to perform their fearsome rituals. Thus, by quirk of fate, was literate civilization born. The erection of these sacrificial hills demanded an advanced organization, as well as record-keeping and mathematical skills.

²⁸ The question is examined in some detail by Heinsohn in *Die Sumerer gab es nicht* (Frankfurt, 1988) and *Wann lebten die Pharaonen?* (Frankfurt, 1990).

The obsessive watch kept on the skies delivered to mankind the calendar and the science of astronomy.

STAIRWAYS TO HEAVEN

If the interpretation of history outlined above is correct, we should expect to find the earliest epoch of civilization, in every part of the globe, to display an obsessive interest in the movements of the heavenly bodies; to be marked by the raising of artificial hills or mounds or pyramids; and to be associated with the custom of human sacrifice.

In fact, each of these three is peculiarly characteristic of all early civilizations.

I do not intend, at this stage, to examine the evidence for this in any detail. Such a project could fill many volumes, and in any case I have elsewhere dealt with the question in a fairly comprehensive manner.²⁹ Suffice for the moment to say that in virtually every corner of the globe, from the Old World and the New, and from both hemispheres, there is evidence of mound-building and planet-worshipping cultures. And archeology, as well as tradition, reveals that these cultures were scarred by repeated natural calamities. Consider the following statement from Professor William Mullen, of Bard's College, New York:

Evidence that both war and government were associated with planetary cults continues in the First and Second Dynasties. Periodic interruptions in the regular succession of kings are accompanied by strong suggestions that the planetary struggle had itself not come to complete stability. The simplest evidence lies in the names by which the pharaohs and their consorts styled themselves. Menes himself has been identified with two different pharaohs whose existence has been archeologically verified by inscriptions on objects found in or near royal tombs. One is Hor-aha, whose name means "Fighting-Hawk," "Hor", being the same as "Horus". The other is Narmer, whose consort was named Nithotep. The huntress goddess Nit is identifiable as planetary in many mythological references, though her cult stood outside the Heliopolitan Ennead, and the name Nithotep, which means "Nit is in peace," probably celebrates the recent stabilization of a menacing celestial body. The element -hotep has this meaning in a large number of other names and contexts, as I will try to establish. That Nit was a concern of both of these first two pharaohs is clear from a wooden label found at Abydos recording Horaha's construction of a temple to her. And that the cults of such deities was a serious business is shown in a similar label from the time of the third authenticated pharaoh, Zer; it depicts a festival at which human sacrifice was performed.

There are strong indications that the First Dynasty was brought to an end by the continuance of the planetary struggle known to the Egyptians as

²⁹ The evidence is examined both in *The Pyramid Age* (1999) and *Arthur and Stonehenge* (2001).

the war between Horus and Seth. Emery reports from his excavations that nearly all the royal monuments of this dynasty have been found obliterated by fire. Manetho states that in the reign of Semerkhet, second to last of the dynasty's kings, "there were many portents and a very great calamity." The founder of the Second Dynasty took the name Hotepsekhemui, which means "the two powers are at peace"; usually interpreted as meaning that upper and lower Egypt have been reconciled, the phrase could just as easily refer to a phase of apparent planetary stability, of which the cessation of factional war was merely a result. The history of the Second Dynasty indicates that instabilities kept recurring. Manetho says that in Hotepsekhemui's reign "a chasm opened at Bubastis and many perished;" Emery adds that this seems geologically authenticated. Four kings later in the Second Dynasty there is the strange spectacle of a pharaoh who in mid-reign ceased to identify himself with Horus and championed the cause of Seth instead; he changed his name from Sekhemib to Perabsen, and in the first of the three names in standard Old Kingdom titulary where a drawing of the hawk of Horus should appear he substituted the dog-like animal of Seth (a species now extinct). Seth also appears on a seal found in his tomb which reads "the god of Ombos [Seth's cult center] to his son Perabsen..." In this case, too, all the royal tombs were found badly damaged by fire. The next two kings for whom there is any archeological authentication called themselves Kha-Sekhem and Kha-Sekhemui, which mean "Appearance of the power," and "Appearance of the two powers"; it is agreed that these names designate the reestablishment of order. Kha-Sekhemui added as one of his other names the phrase "the two gods in him are at peace".³⁰

As the above writer makes clear, this earliest epoch of high civilization in Egypt was an epoch of human sacrifice. A detailed examination of the early civilizations, in whatever part of the globe we wish to explore, shows that all of them practiced human sacrifice, and that these offerings were particularly associated with the cults linked to the mound or pyramid-structures.

As might be expected all of these features are characteristic of Early Dynastic Mesopotamia and Egypt. The ziggurats of Mesopotamia are rather obviously high altars upon which were performed the bloody rituals necessary to ward off calamity. Although no ziggurats survive from the Early Dynastic period, it is agreed that the custom of ziggurat-building had its origins at that time. Cuneiform documents make it very plain that the sacrifices dedicated atop the ziggurats — in the House of the God — were all that stood between creation and a renewed assault by the serpent monster Tiamat. The Creation Epic itself tells us how immediately after destroying Tiamat, Marduk orders the building of the first ziggurat:

I shall make a house to be a luxurious dwelling for myself
And shall found his [Marduk's] cult center within it ...

30 William Mullen, "Myth and the Science of Catastrophism: A Reading of the Pyramid Texts," *Pensée*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1973).

In gratitude for saving the universe from Tiamat, the other gods offer to build Marduk's home for him, at which point,

His face lit up greatly, like daylight.

“Create Babylon, whose construction you requested!

Let its mud bricks be molded, and build high the shrine.”

During the space of an entire year the gods manufacture bricks, and by the end of the second year they have built the great shrine and ziggurat of Esagila. Another well-known Mesopotamian text, “The Deluge”, is equally specific in connecting the establishment of cult centers (temples) to the aftermath of a cosmic catastrophe:

My mankind, in its destruction I will ...

I will return the people to their settlements

After the ... of kingship had been lowered from heaven,

After the exalted tiara and the throne of

kingship had been lowered from heaven,

He perfected the rites and the exalted divine laws ...,

Founded the five cities in ... pure places,

Called their names, apportioned them as cult centers.³¹

The Mesopotamian sources therefore connect not only the establishment of religious customs, but the very idea of priest-kingship, to the aftermath of some cataclysmic disaster. The whole concept of kingship was everywhere initially inseparable from priesthood, and all the early kings were at the same time High Priests, one of whose major functions was the offering of blood sacrifices on high altars. This is further emphasized in another Mesopotamian text, *The Epic of Etana*, which states that immediately after the Flood:

The great Annunaki, who decree the fate,

Sat down, taking counsel about the land.

They who created the regions, who set up the establishment,

The Igigi were too lofty for mankind,

A stated time for mankind they decreed.

The beclouded people, in all, had not set up a king.

At that time, no tiara had been tied on, nor crown,

And no scepter had been inlaid with lapis;

The shrines had not been built altogether.

³¹ S.N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-Nine Firsts in Man's Recorded History* (Pennsylvania, 1981) p. 149.

The seven [Igigi] had barred the gates
against the settlers [settlements].
Scepter, crown tiara, and [shepherd's] crook
Lay deposited before Anu in heaven,
There being no counseling for its people.
[Then] kingship descended from heaven.³²

In Egypt during the same period we witness the phenomenon of the Step Pyramids. It is claimed, and so stated in one authoritative publication after another, that the pyramid symbol in Egypt had no real cosmic significance and that the form took shape, almost by accident, when the sage Imhotep had the idea of putting a few mastabas of progressively diminishing size, on top of each other. This is simply untrue. The Egyptian pyramid was not “invented” by Imhotep. Scholars increasingly are being compelled to admit that the pyramid, or more accurately the stepped pyramid, represents the universally-occurring Primeval Mound or Sacred Mountain and that the erection of such sacred structures commenced right at the start of the First Dynasty. One writer comments: “There was no fixed form for the Primeval Hill ... the mound was soon formalized into an eminence with sloping or battered sides or a platform surrounded by steps on each side [pict. of step pyr]. This became the most usual symbol. It is probably what the step pyramids represent.”³³

An ever-growing body of material suggests that these sacred mounds, or stepped pyramids, were being raised from the very beginning of the First Dynasty. Thus an inscription from Sakkara informs us that king Djjet of Dynasty I also built a pyramid there — presumably of mud-brick,³⁴ whilst it has been demonstrated that the “mastaba” tombs of Dynasties. 1 and 2 were constructed over mounds of earth that were sometimes given a stepped appearance.³⁵ Reisner was convinced that the superstructures of the tombs of Djer and Djjet rose by two and three steps respectively to a level summit about eight and twelve meters in height.³⁶ These diminutive stepped pyramids are clearly the forerunners of Djoser’s much larger stone structure. Indeed, in a

32 J. Pritchard, (ed.) *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (1949) p. 114.

33 R.T. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol* (London, 1959) pp.38-9.

34 See *Egyptian Archeology* No.6 (1995) pp.26-7.

35 M. Rice, *Egypt's Making* (1990) p. 118.

36 I. E. S. Edwards, “The Early Dynastic Period in Egypt,” in *CAH* Vol.1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 65.

sense, the Sakkara pyramid, inside its enormous enclosing wall, is, taken all together, little more than a giant mastaba in stone. All of these mud-brick stepped pyramids, occurring at the start of pharaonic times, undoubtedly represent the Primeval Hill, for, as we saw above, the hieroglyphic symbol for this was a stepped pyramid. The symbol may have been significant even before the start of the First Dynasty, for in Hierakonpolis (Nekhen), home of the first Horus kings, archeologists discovered quite possibly the earliest representation of the Sacred Hill. In the words of David Rohl, the city's primitive reed temple sat "... on a mound of clean desert sand (enclosed in a sloping revetment wall of bricks) [and] was the first foundation of the Shebtu [ruling elite] in the Nile valley. Here is a striking architectural feature which links us with both Bahrain and Mesopotamia. As Petrie noted in 1939, the temple of Barbar on Bahrain was constructed on top of a hill or platform of clean sand as were many of the holy sites in Sumer. Such sandy mounds represent the primeval hill upon which the first temple of creation at Eridu was constructed. The Egyptian religious texts mention another sacred mound of sand at Heliopolis upon which the Benben was erected. The Benben was the sacred stone onto which the mythological Benu-bird (the fabulous Phoenix) alighted to establish the temple of Atum at the city of the sun ... This was the most important center of Atum/Re worship in Egypt and its roots go back to the legendary era of the predynastic Horus kings."³⁷

The sacrifices offered atop these man-made Primeval Hills were almost certainly human, for human sacrifice, on a fairly grandiose scale, is attested both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia throughout the Early Dynastic epoch. We may mention, for example, a large mastaba-tomb at Giza, Mastaba V, apparently dating from the reign of King Djet (1st Dynasty), which was surrounded by the graves of 56 retainers.³⁸ At Abydos and Abu Rawash there is evidence of large-scale sacrifice of prisoners, whilst one eminent authority was moved to comment: "In spite of the insufficiency of evidence to show the extent of the practice of human sacrifice during the Early Dynastic Period, the fact of its existence cannot be questioned. If the number of subsidiary graves bear any relation, as is probable, to the number of persons sacrificed,

³⁷ D. Rohl, *Legend: The Genesis of Civilisation* (1998) pp.349-50.

³⁸ I. Shaw and p. Nicholson, *British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt* pp. 109-10.

the custom reached its peak under Djer [Dynasty I], whose two ‘tomb’ complexes at Abydos contained more than 590 subsidiary graves.”³⁹

The enormous scale of Mesopotamian human sacrifice during this epoch was brought to scholarship’s attention when Sir Leonard Woolley opened the notorious Grave Pits at Ur, where the bodies of hundreds of servants who had been forced to accompany their masters to the Underworld were discovered. Scholars agree that in Mesopotamia the practice of human sacrifice commenced at the start of Early Dynastic II — contemporary with the first ziggurats — and ended towards the close of that same epoch (the end of the Early Dynastic period).⁴⁰ Here there is fairly precise correspondence with the situation in Egypt, for here too the custom of human sacrifice apparently came to a rather abrupt end with the close of the Early Dynastic Age, at the end of Dynasty 2.

³⁹ I. E. S. Edwards, loc. cit. p. 58.

⁴⁰ Sir Max Mallowan, “The Early Dynastic Period in Mesopotamia,” in *CAH* Vol.1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 286.

CHAPTER 2. THE DAWN OF HISTORY

THE FOUNDATION OF EGYPT'S HISTORY

According to the traditions of Egypt, the land of the Nile had anciently been divided into two hostile kingdoms, Upper and Lower Egypt, but that, sometime in the distant past, a ruler named Menes or Mena had united the two lands. From the Ptolemaic scholar Manetho we learn that Menes was a native of Thinis, near Abydos in Upper Egypt, and that in a long-celebrated war he conquered Lower Egypt and founded the First Dynasty. It was with Menes that Egyptian civilization, as we now know it, commenced. Although no pharaoh named Menes has been positively identified from the monuments, it is generally assumed that he is most probably an alter-ego of one of the powerful Early Dynastic kings, probably either Narmer or Aha, whose tombs have been discovered at Hierakonpolis (Egyptian Nekhen), just to the south of Thebes. Along with these monarchs archeologists discovered the tombs of various other pharaohs and dignitaries of the First Dynasty, men with names such as Djer, Den, Anedjib, Semerkhet and Kaa, some of whom can be positively identified with rulers known from Manetho and the hieroglyphic king-lists. It seems in fact that Hierakonpolis, rather than Thinis, was the real source of the First Dynasty rulers, the "Followers of Horus" who were ever afterwards known as the Great Ones of Nekhen.

At the start of the First Dynasty the Nile Valley experienced a remarkable and unprecedented flowering of civilization. This occurred with a speed,

almost a suddenness, which has astonished historians. The art of writing appears, without any real signs of prior development, in an almost fully-developed state. Few major innovations occurred after this. The plastic arts too, most especially carving in stone, reached unprecedented levels of sophistication. Egyptian craftsmen of the time began to produce vessels of stone so outstanding in quality that modern scholarship is still at a loss to explain the methods used. One point upon which there is no contention however is that Egypt's Early Dynastic epoch, this age of dramatic progress in civilization, was roughly contemporary with the Early Dynastic epoch of Mesopotamia, and in fact parallels between the first civilizations of these two great lands have long been noted. So obvious are the similarities, in terms of art, religion and culture in general, that many scholars have been prompted to view the Egyptian culture as an offshoot of the Mesopotamian.

The Mesopotamian influence arrived in the Nile Valley at a very precise point in time. In the centuries before the start of the historical age, Egypt was the home to a series of cultures, each clearly defined by the characteristic artwork, pottery and burial customs of its people. The first pottery-using culture, known to archeologists as Naqada I, was entirely native to the Nile Valley, a fact displayed by the parallels with other groups throughout northern and eastern Africa. But the demise of Naqada I saw the arrival of a new culture, Naqada II (or Gerzean), with strong links to Mesopotamia. Naqada II represents a complete break with the past. Everything changes. Pottery is different; religious iconography is different; burial customs are different; economy and farming practices are different. Most striking of all however is the sudden appearance of writing — writing at a fairly advanced level of development; writing which has already moved beyond the level of pictographs. Along with this writing is the appearance of the cylinder-seal, a peculiarly Mesopotamian invention originally designed for marking ownership by impressing on the wet clay used for so many functions in the ancient Land of the Two Rivers.

The Naqada II culture immediately preceded the rise of dynastic Egyptian civilization — a civilization which continued, for a short period at least, to display the striking Asiatic influences established shortly before.

The first scholar to devote serious consideration to this topic was Flinders Petrie, and the conclusions he reached have been further verified by discoveries made since. Because of the predynastic eastern influences, most espe-

cially the cylinder-seals and writing, Petrie regarded Egyptian civilization as a hybrid phenomenon resulting from the intermingling of native Egyptians with immigrant culture-bearers from Mesopotamia.⁴¹ Thus he spoke of a great migration from Mesopotamia to Egypt at the very dawn of history.⁴²

Since Petrie's time our knowledge of Early Dynastic civilization has expanded greatly, and indeed the Mesopotamian origin of Egyptian civilization has now become part of accepted wisdom. In the 1971 edition of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, I.E.S. Edwards devoted considerable space to a discussion of the question. "Foremost among the indications of early contacts between Egypt and Mesopotamia," he says, "must be counted the occurrence in both countries of a small group of remarkably similar designs, mostly embodying animals."⁴³ The artistic parallels are detailed and striking: "Both on the Narmer palette and on the seals, the necks of the monsters are interlaced — a well-attested motif in Mesopotamian art, to which the interlaced serpents found on three protodynastic knife handles may be an additional artistic parallel."⁴⁴ Some Egyptian work of the period looks as if it was actually produced in Mesopotamia. A famous ivory knife-handle, for example, found at Gebel el-Araq, "portrays in finely carved relief a bearded man clothed in Sumerian costume and holding apart two fierce lions."⁴⁵ In Edwards' words, "so close does the composition of this scene resemble the so-called Gilgamesh motif, frequently represented on Mesopotamian seals, that the source of the inspiration can hardly be questioned."⁴⁶

Since these words were written, things have moved on substantially, and more recent studies have revealed in fairly dramatic detail the extent of Egypt's debt to Mesopotamia. An in-depth examination of the material presented by the various scholars would be beyond the scope of the present work, though a brief overview of what has been discovered so far will serve to illustrate to the reader just how all-pervasive the evidence has become. Before doing so, we should note an important point. These Mesopotamian influences did not arrive by way of trade but through a migration, a movement of population that did not last any great length of time but which had a profound influence on the course of future events. I. E. S. Edwards names

41 F. Petrie, *The Making of Egypt* (1939) pp.77-8

42 Ibid.

43 I. E. S. Edwards, loc. cit. p. 41

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., p. 42.

46 Ibid.

these folk the “Dynastic Race” and notes that they “differed unmistakably from the predynastic Egyptians.”⁴⁷ Whereas the latter were unusually small in stature and possessed long and narrow skulls, “the newcomers were more massively built and their skulls ... were appreciably broader than those of their predecessors.” We are further informed that, “The quality and distribution of the skeletons hitherto found suggest that the ‘Dynastic Race’ entered Egypt in considerable numbers from the north, where the purest examples of their racial type have been discovered; this fact alone would suggest that the immigrants came from Asia....”

MESOPOTAMIAN ORIGINS

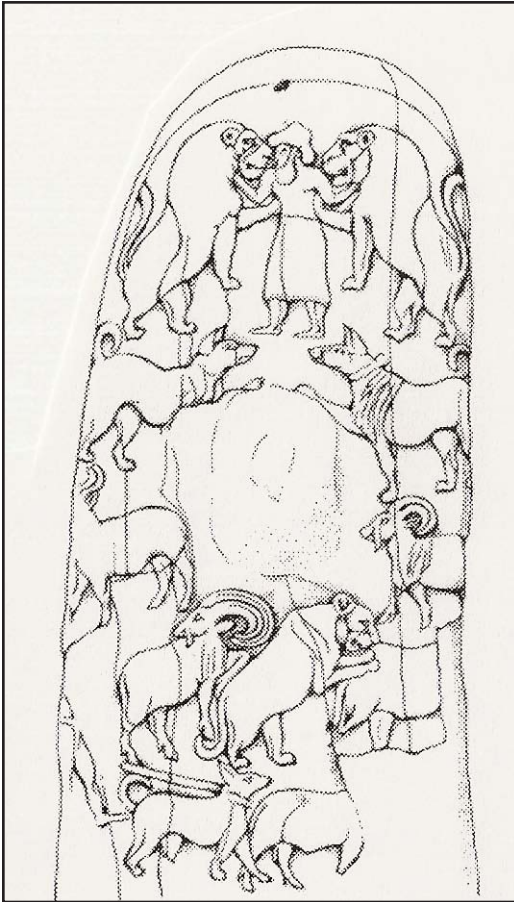
In his *Egypt's Making* (1990) Michael Rice lists at least a dozen areas of Naqada II culture that display very specific Mesopotamian parallels. David Rohl (*Legend: The Genesis of Civilization*, 1998) looks at even more, going into such detail that he has quite possibly forever silenced whatever lingering doubts there may have been. Foremost among the Mesopotamian parallels examined by Rohl, constituting perhaps the most pervasive material evidence in the Near Eastern sites, is pottery. From Naqada I to II there was an almost complete break in Egyptian pottery manufacture. The old, very distinctive red-glazed work of Naqada I is largely (though not completely) replaced by new forms of very clear Asiatic provenance. The Naqada II pottery (also called Gerzean) in fact is virtually identical to that of the Jamat Nasr period of Mesopotamia, so similar indeed that the two types could almost have been produced in the same workshops. Most obviously, lug-handled jars of eastern type now become very common in Egypt. Rohl has noted that whilst the lug-handled pot may just have been developed independently in both regions (the form is very utilitarian), the same cannot be said of the other pottery form now appearing in Egypt: jars with distinctive teapot-type spouts. This form is so peculiarly Mesopotamian that, in Rohl's estimate, it is extremely unlikely the Egyptians would have evolved it independently.⁴⁸

It is perhaps above all the evidence of pottery which tells us that the Asiatic penetration of Egypt at this time was not simply the result of trade, but of a substantial population movement.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 40.

⁴⁸ Rohl, *Legend: The Genesis of Civilisation* (London, 1998) p. 311.

FIGURE 8. GEBEL EL-ARAQ KNIFE HANDLE



Note: Late Predynastic ivory knife handle from Egypt, showing clear Mesopotamian influence. In particular, the hero-figure between two lions, dressed in long coat and turban-like headdress, finds his exact counterpart in Early Dynastic Mesopotamia and Elam. According to Petrie, the two dogs underneath belong to the Babylonian myth of Elana and the flying eagle (cf. Petrie *The Making of Egypt* (1939)).

Along with the pottery, a whole host of cultural innovations arrived in the Nile Valley. These included various types of weaponry, but most especially maces with peculiar pear-shaped heads, the semi-precious stone lapis-lazuli, high-prowed boats, building in mud-brick, royal insignia and iconography, cylinder-seals, writing and some vocabulary; even the names of a few of Egypt's most important gods appear to have entered the land with the newcomers.

Much has been written about the introduction of the pear-shaped mace-head into Egypt at this time. That this type of weapon originated in Mesopotamia is beyond question, a fact which has prompted speculation that the

easterners came as invaders.⁴⁹ Certainly there is every likelihood that such was the case, and the weapon stands as an important indicator of one possible method by which the Mesopotamians imposed their culture so effectively on the inhabitants of the Nile Valley.

A great deal of debate has also centered round the appearance of lapis-lazuli in Egypt at the beginning of the period under discussion. This highly-valued stone is known to have originated in Badakhshan on the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to have reached Egypt via Mesopotamia.⁵⁰ It appears in the rich graves of the protodynastic epoch, and continues to occur in the early burials of Dynasty I. But it disappears abruptly after the reign of King Djer, in the middle of the First Dynasty,⁵¹ not occurring again in Egypt until the Fourth Dynasty, hundreds of years later. This fact alone suggests that the movement or migration from Mesopotamia to Egypt was a “one-off” and that the flow of newcomers dried up after only a short period of time.

Much ink has been used in the debate over the high-prowed boats introduced by the Mesopotamian migrants. Illustrations of these vessels occur in the most unlikely of places, including the now-arid Wadi Hammamat in the eastern desert between the Nile and Red Sea. We have already noted that these rock-etchings also show animals of the African savannah, including ostriches, elephants, gazelle and giraffe, demonstrating in the most graphic way possible that in this epoch the area was not a desert. Regarding the boats, a number of writers, beginning with Petrie, have seen in these proof that the Mesopotamian immigrants reached Egypt by sea, rounding the Arabian Peninsula to the south. Yet illustrations of these same boats are found throughout central Arabia, and no one would surely suggest that the migrants would have needed to use ships to get there from the Land of the Two Rivers. In any case, the evidence shows that the boats illustrated were primarily cult-objects, and not necessarily vessels used for travel.⁵²

The influence of Mesopotamia is found in the minutiae of predynastic culture, but also in the greatest things. The first Egyptian architecture dated from this time and, just as we might expect, it is entirely Mesopotamian in character. The mastaba tombs of Naqada II have an eastern antecedent, as noted in 1971 by I.E.S. Edwards: “excavation in Mesopotamia has revealed

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 314-5.

⁵⁰ Michael Rice, *Egypt's Making* (1990) p. 35.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

the more primitive wooden construction from which this style of architecture was no doubt derived, and ... the earliest Mesopotamian examples in brick are considerably older than the first mastabas of the Naqada form found in Egypt, where they appear quite suddenly at the beginning of the First Dynasty.”⁵³ Various scholars have in fact illustrated how the perimeter walls of the mastabas, with their regular buttresses and recesses (or niched facades), display a style of construction very peculiar to Mesopotamia. In the words of Henri Frankfort: “Under the First Dynasty [of Egypt], when brick architecture came into its own, this new and more permanent architecture was used, at first, for the royal tombs which were decorated with buttresses and recesses on all four sides. This ornamentation was achieved, in some cases, by the use of two kinds of bricks — large ones for the core of the building and smaller ones for the recessing. These small bricks are of a size and shape peculiar, in Mesopotamia, to the latter half of the Protoliterate Period and were used in an identical fashion, three rows of stretchers alternating as a rule with one row of headers. The recesses and buttresses duplicate exactly the recessing of [Mesopotamian] protoliterate temples. Other technical details — the manner in which a plinth or platform is constructed, the use of short timbers inserted horizontally as the strengthening in the niches — likewise reflect Mesopotamian usage in the Protoliterate Period ... In view of this great variety of detailed resemblances there can be no reasonable doubt that the earliest monumental brick architecture of Egypt was inspired by that of Mesopotamia where it had a long previous history.”⁵⁴

The influence of Mesopotamia was not confined to material culture, but exerted itself even on the Egyptian belief-systems and language. Furthermore, that language could now be written down for the first time. Because the symbols used in the Egyptian script were not (for the most part) directly copied from those developed in Mesopotamia, it was decreed that though there were “certain affinities”, the differences between the two were “too significant to be disregarded,” and “it is probably correct to assess the Sumerian contribution to the Egyptian science of writing as mainly suggestive and limited to imparting a knowledge of the underlying principles.”⁵⁵ Thus the opinion of I.E.S. Edwards; Henri Frankfort, however, was inclined to go much further:

53 I.E.S. Edwards, loc. cit.

54 Cf. Rohl p. 326.

55 Edwards, loc. cit. p. 44.

It has been customary to postulate prehistoric antecedents for the Egyptian script, but this hypothesis has nothing in its favour ... the writing which first appeared without antecedents at the beginning of the First Dynasty was by no means primitive. It has, in fact, a complex structure. It includes three different classes of signs: ideograms, phonetic signs, and determinatives. This is precisely the same state of complexity as had been reached in Mesopotamia at an advanced stage of the Protoliterate Period. There, however, a more primitive stage is known in the earlier tablets, which used only ideograms. To deny, therefore, that Egyptian and Mesopotamian systems of writing are related amounts to maintaining that Egypt invented independently a complex and not very consistent system at the very moment of being influenced in its art and architecture by Mesopotamia where a precisely similar system had just been developed from a more primitive stage.⁵⁶

Along with writing, the Mesopotamian migrants brought many words and technical terms. These, according to some authorities, include the words for hoe, spade, plough, corn, beer and carpenter, a series whose significance in terms of the development of agriculture is obvious enough.⁵⁷ Egyptian is distantly related to the Semitic languages of western Asia; but most of these words are derived from the non-Semitic Sumerian. One word which has attracted much attention is *maat*, which in Egyptian signified “truth” or “order”. *Maat* is a feminine word carrying an unpronounced “t” at the end, and was therefore an almost exact counterpart of the Sumerian term used to denote cosmic order, *me*. David Rohl argued that many of the Mesopotamian immigrants came from the Eridu region and noted that the sacred mound in Hierakonpolis was modeled on similar structures in southern Mesopotamia. He also regarded the Egyptian name for the Primeval Hill, Nun, to be derived from one of Eridu’s ancient names, *Nun.ki* — the “Land of Nun”.⁵⁸

To all of these must be added the names of several of Egypt’s most important gods. Thus Isis (Egyptian Aset) appears to be in origin exactly the same word as Ishtar, with whom she was in any case linked in ancient times. Isis’ husband Osiris (Egyptian Asar) also has a Mesopotamian name, for Asar was an important deity in that region in primeval times.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the actual myth of Isis and Osiris bears remarkably close comparison with that of the Sumerian Innana (Ishtar) and Dummuzi (Tammuz). Isis’ search for Osiris after his murder is strikingly similar to Inanna’s descent into the underworld in search of Dummuzi.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 317-8.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 347.

⁵⁹ Rice, loc. cit. p. 54.

There is strong evidence too, noted both by Rice and Rohl, that some aspects of Egyptian divine and royal iconography, such as for example the white crown of Upper Egypt, had Mesopotamian origins.

This great migration touched large areas of the Near East. The immigrants settled not only in Egypt, but also, and even more so, in Syria/Palestine and Arabia. Now, we must ask ourselves, did this mass population movement, so momentous in its consequences, leave any trace in the traditions of the populations of the region? Or is it, as the archeologists seem to believe, totally lost in the mists of time?

The great migration was not lost to history. All the peoples of the region, the Arabs, the Syrians and the Jews, recall very clearly the journey of their ancestors from Mesopotamia.

THE ABRAHAM MIGRATION

The Israelites or Hebrews, as they appear to have been known at an earlier stage, were for centuries in close contact with the people of Egypt. Almost all the most important events of early biblical history directly involved Egypt. This applied even to the first phase of Israelite history, when Abraham, the founder and father of the Israelite/Jewish people, was said to have entered the Land of the Nile in the course of his wanderings. For centuries scholars sought to “tie-in” the Egyptian and Hebrew histories, and repeated attempts were made to discover which pharaoh reigned during the lifetimes of Abraham, Joseph and Moses. Immediately prior to the decipherment of the hieroglyphs, it was hoped and expected that the native records of Egypt would provide definitive answers to these questions, and it was confidently believed, in some quarters, that the Bible was about to find unequivocal confirmation.

Yet no such thing happened. To the despair of both Egyptologists and biblical scholars, it was found that the hieroglyphs produced barely a single reference to the Israelites. Eventually it was admitted that the Patriarchs and leaders of Genesis were not the great and important men that the scriptural sources implied. If they existed at all, they must have been the leaders of small bands of Semitic shepherds whom the scribes of Egypt did not consider important enough to mention. Thus it is now widely assumed, both in lay and scholarly circles, that the Old Testament deals solely with the history of

the Jewish people, and that the great events of the past are largely ignored, or alluded to only insofar as they affected the Chosen People.

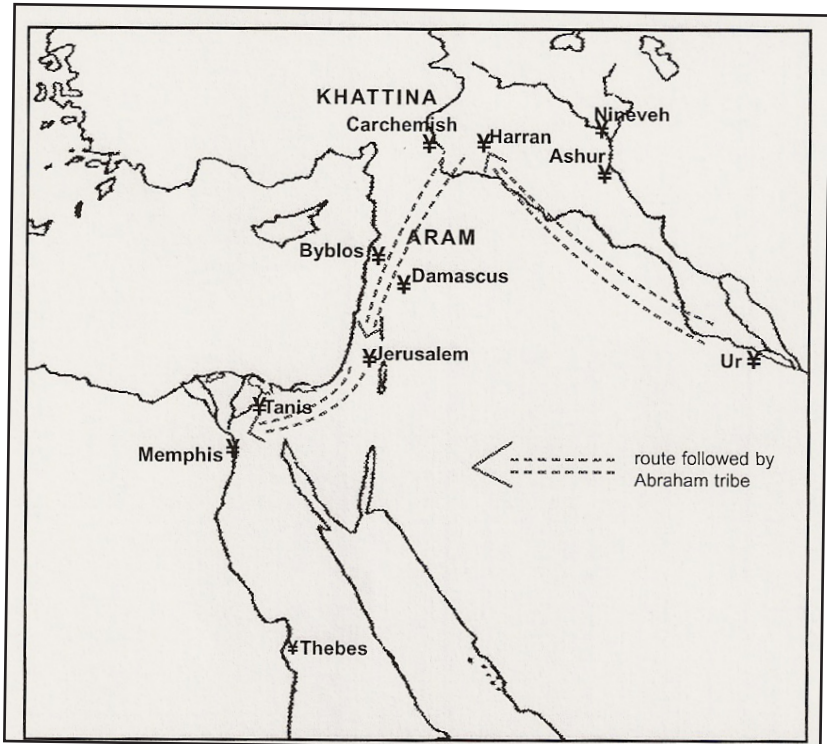
There is no doubt that the later parts of the Old Testament, as found in the books of the prophets, Kings and Chronicles, do generally conform to this pattern. Yet this is eminently not the case with regard to the Book of Genesis. Here the focus is upon events of truly cosmic dimensions. The Creation of Man can hardly be described as insignificant; nor was the Flood. Nor, we shall argue, was the Tower of Babel episode. Genesis, it would appear, especially in its earlier parts, deals solely with happenings whose very magnitude impressed themselves upon the minds of subsequent generations. Knowledge of the past was in those days transmitted by word of mouth, a restriction, it seems, which effectively filtered out the trivia.

Bearing this in mind, we must now re-examine the story of Abraham, an episode which both the Bible and extra-scriptural Jewish tradition viewed as being of immense significance.

Abraham, famously, a native of southern Mesopotamia, was the founder and original patriarch of the Jewish people. Instructed by God, his father Terah quit his home in southern Mesopotamia (Ur of the Chaldeans) in search of a land that God would show him. The migration was completed by Abraham, who, after a brief sojourn in Egypt, reached and settled in the Promised Land of Canaan. Yet Abraham was the progenitor not only of the Jews. Other peoples, most particularly the numerous tribes of Arabia, were said to have been descended from him. His very name means "father of many".

The great migration from southern Mesopotamia, which archeology places at the beginning of Egypt's First Dynasty, displays many remarkable parallels with the Abraham migration. Were it not for the chronology scholars would probably have looked at the possibility of linking the two events. Such a possibility however was never explored, or even considered, because the accepted chronology placed Abraham around 2000 BC and the founding of Egypt under Menes around 3200 BC. Yet as we shall see neither the date provided for Abraham nor for Menes has any firm scientific foundation. If scholars had been more careful, if they had considered the fundamentals and set aside "traditional" chronological schemes, they would have discovered astonishing parallels between the Mesopotamian migration told in the Book of Genesis and that discovered by archeology.

FIGURE 9. ABRAHAM'S MIGRATION TO CANAAN AND EGYPT.



Note: Abraham's tribe migrated to Egypt, according to Josephus, at the very dawn of Egyptian history. This is in striking agreement with the archeological record, which shows a distinct Mesopotamian influence on 1st Dynasty Egypt.

We shall shortly demonstrate how the entire Patriarch epoch should have been located in the Early Dynastic Age. Numerous clues in Genesis, either misunderstood or ignored by the majority of scholars, point in this direction. Most importantly, we may note here and now that Jewish tradition states very explicitly that in the time of Abraham the Egyptians were virtual barbarians, and that it was the Patriarch himself who taught them the rudiments of civilization. Upon entering Egypt the father of the Jews, according to Josephus Flavius, was given leave by pharaoh to:

...enter into conversation with the most learned of the Egyptians: from which conversation his virtue and his reputation became more conspicuous than they had been before.

For whereas the Egyptians were formally addicted to different customs, and despised one another's sacred and accustomed rites, and were very angry with one another on that account; Abram conferred with each of them, and confuting the reasonings they made use of, every one for their own practices, he demonstrated that such reasonings were vain and void of truth; whereupon he was admired by them in these great conferences as a very wise man, and one of great sagacity. He communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for, before Abram came into Egypt they were unaccustomed with these parts of learning.⁶⁰

Other Jewish tradition, as compiled for example in Ginzberg's *Legends*, states very clearly that Abraham entered Egypt during the reign of the first pharaoh.⁶¹

We saw earlier how the great migratory wave which left southern Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf at the dawn of the literate age penetrated Egypt and settled in strength on the western parts of Arabia and in Syria/Palestine. Here there is precise agreement with the picture painted in Genesis. As well as entering Egypt and teaching the natives the essentials of civilized life, Abraham is said to have peopled Arabia through Ishmael, his son by the Egyptian Hagar.⁶² Inter-marriage with the Egyptians is also suggested in the temporary liaison of Sarai with the pharaoh.⁶³

It would appear then that Hebrew tradition concurs with archeology in claiming a Mesopotamian origin for Egyptian civilization and that the story of Abraham recalls that culture-bearing migration. Could it be then that the experts have got it wrong? That no gap of 1,200 years exists between Menes and Abraham; and that the chronological disagreement here exposed is merely a reflection of the stratigraphic and archeological discrepancies already noted in the previous chapter? Or could it be that the archeological disagreement is not the cause but the result of an already chaotic chronology?

Before making a final judgment on this, and before looking at some of the truly astounding similarities between Menes and Abraham, it needs to be stressed that neither the Egyptian nor the biblical dates are reliable. Before seeking to find which may be wrong, we have to emphasize that in all probability both are. The biblical date of Abraham was established via a fundamentalist interpretation of the genealogies and life spans provided in Gen-

60 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (trans. Whiston) Bk.1 155-7.

61 L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1909) Vol. 1 p. 225. "The Egyptian ruler, whose meeting with Abraham had proved so untoward an event, was the first to bear the name pharaoh."

62 Genesis 16:1-5.

63 *Ibid.*, 11:15.

esis. Characters such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were treated as real people, and their life spans added together to reach Abraham's supposed epoch. Yet scholarship has proved fairly conclusively that all of these were deities, not people; hence it was quite wrong to use them to establish chronologies. Nevertheless, dates derived from these characters are still published, without comment, in textbooks. With Egyptian time-scales things are no better. Elsewhere I have demonstrated how the chronology still provided for Egypt is ultimately dependant on the early Christian writer Eusebius, who, seeking to prove the authenticity of Genesis, made Egyptian civilization commence with the Creation of the World, as recounted in Genesis.⁶⁴ Eusebius therefore, relying on Jewish chroniclers working in Alexandria, provided a date of circa 3700 to 4,000 BC for Menes, a date which has formed the cornerstone of Egyptian chronology for centuries, and which has been subject to only minor amendments by modern scholarship.

IN THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS

The question as to where the Patriarchs should be placed historically is one that has long exercised the minds of historians and theologians. Whilst it is readily admitted that many features of the Patriarch narratives seem to belong to the remotest antiquity, the tyranny of accepted chronology, which places Abraham around 2000 BC, has forced the belief that the archaic elements are anachronisms, and that the biblical Patriarchs inhabited a world of long-established empires and civilizations which had already reached an advanced stage of the Middle Bronze Age.

Yet, as we shall see at a later stage, other evidence points in the opposite direction. Thus the occurrence of camels (dromedaries) in the narrative, has convinced not a few scholars that the entire story is a fiction composed in the sixth or even fifth century BC, for it was only then that camels were domesticated.

How to make sense of such radically contradictory evidences?

When looking at the Patriarch chapters of Genesis we must bear in mind first and foremost that the established chronology is in error. We must understand that the Patriarch epoch has been misplaced by a thousand years and uprooted from its true location. The evidence for placing Abraham and the rest in the Early Dynastic epoch, at the very dawn of civilization, should

⁶⁴ In my *Pyramid Age* (2007 ed.).

not have been ignored. Yet we must also bear in mind the fact that these stories were handed down by word of mouth for many generations and centuries before being committed to writing. When they were finally thus recorded the world had changed beyond recognition, and the scribes who committed them to the parchment or papyrus implanted many of the social and cultural norms of their own epoch into the narrative. Yet having said that, enough genuinely ancient material remained to put the true location and context of these stories beyond question.

Consider the facts. Right throughout the Patriarch narratives there are details which strongly suggest we are in very primitive times. Abraham and his followers travel apparently uninterrupted throughout the Fertile Crescent. There appear to be no formal international boundaries or control of movement. His people engage in a war (The “War of the Four Kings”) where the outcome is decided by the intervention of a few hundred men (Genesis 14:14-17). When Abraham initiates the custom of circumcision (a custom attested in Egypt from the very start of Dynasty I), he appears to use a flint knife to perform the operation. Certainly Moses, after the Exodus, orders the operation to be performed with such implements (Exodus 4:24), a circumstance strongly suggesting that these were the traditional tools used.

We have already seen that human sacrifice was a defining characteristic of the Early Dynastic epoch, both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. These rituals, we recall, were performed atop raised, stepped platforms — the earliest pyramids. Now there is abundant evidence to show that both human sacrifice and the raised altars upon which the ritual was performed were of central importance in the epoch under discussion. Most famous in this regard is Abraham’s abortive sacrifice of Isaac. In the account that has come down to us, Abraham does not sacrifice his son, but instead offers a ram caught in a nearby thicket. Because of this, some commentators have argued that Abraham is here abolishing human sacrifice. This was not, however, the opinion shared by the great Eduard Meyer, who held that the legend originated in the sacrifice of children to a god named *pachad yitzchak*, or “Fear of Isaac”.⁶⁵

It is almost certain, therefore, that Abraham was originally cast in the role of initiator of flesh sacrifices, and that his true nature was altered — in order to be more palatable — at a comparatively late date.

65 E. Meyer and B. Luther, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme* (Halle, 1906) pp.254ff.

Human sacrifice is hinted at throughout the Patriarch epoch. Thus in Jewish legend astrologers of the tyrant king Nimrod see a comet in the east which swallows four stars in different quarters of the heavens. This they interpret as a prophecy concerning Terah's son Abram, whom they predict will grow to be a peerless leader whose own descendants will inherit the earth.⁶⁶ To forestall such an outcome, Nimrod is advised to kill the child, but is thwarted in his designs when Terah substitutes a slave-woman's infant. His own son he conceals in a cave, in the care of a foster-mother, for ten years. It is said that this was the event which led to Terah's migration from Ur.

Thus Abraham is saved from sacrifice by the sacrifice of another infant. Human sacrifice is fundamental to his entire story.

In the story of Moses, the killing of the Hebrew boys by pharaoh is almost certainly another oblique reference to human sacrifice. Jewish tradition makes the connection more specific, for it is said that the blood of the murdered babies was mixed with the mud and straw employed by the slaves in their brick-making. Ancient tradition from various regions tells us that the body of a sacrificed child was frequently placed in the foundation of a sacred building.

The legend of the baby Moses being consigned to a basket in the Nile is quite likely a reflection of ancient beliefs about the fate of sacrificed children. The basket is a barque which conveys the dead child through the waters of the Underworld to the home of the gods. In the Hebrew Bible the word used for this basket is *tebhah* — exactly the same word as is used for Noah's Ark.

It is surely significant that the same story was told of the mighty Mesopotamian king Sargon I, who was, moreover, supposed to be the child of a temple prostitute (which in effect made him a child of the creator-god). Children of temple prostitutes were perhaps, at this stage, especially marked out for sacrifice. But to be a victim of human sacrifice was to share in the divine nature. These children were god-like. Hercules too, that other son of the Divine Father, was also placed in peril whilst in his cradle-basket. For Moses and Sargon to be linked to such a story was a mark of their divine natures.⁶⁷

66 L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (1909) Vol. 1 pp. 186-7.

67 We should not overlook the parallels here with the story of Osiris. According to this legend, the Lord of the Underworld was locked in a chest by his evil brother Set (i.e., he was sacrificed) and cast adrift on the Nile. Eventually, it was said, he was washed ashore in Byblos. And the myth has a wide distribution, occurring for example in the story of Perseus, cast into the sea in a chest, and in the Celtic myth of Lugh (Lugos), also cast into the ocean in a chest.

In addition to human sacrifice, the Patriarch legends are full of hints that high places were then viewed as meeting points with the gods. There is also direct evidence of links with Mesopotamian ziggurat-worship.

We have already seen how Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac occurred at the top of a mountain, and the long biblical tradition which viewed mountain-tops as meeting-points with the divine evidently has a very ancient pedigree. As we saw in the previous chapter, during the Early Dynastic epoch (in Mesopotamia and Egypt), pyramids and ziggurats were in some way or other viewed as representations of the universal concept of the Sacred Mountain, and the Egyptian festival of Min, chief god of the First Dynasty, known as the Festival of the Coming Forth of Min, showed the deity standing atop a stepped throne or stairway. Michael Rice notes how in Early Dynastic times, "the ladder ... played some part in the earlier rituals associated with the divine Kingship."⁶⁸ It is evident too that the pyramid was itself seen as a symbolic "stairway to heaven".

The same concept appears in Genesis. Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, came to "a holy place" on his way from Beersheba to Harran. There, "He lay down to sleep, resting his head on a stone. He dreamed that he saw a stairway reaching from earth to heaven, with angels going up and coming down on it" (Gen. 28:12). He named the place *Bethel* ("house of God"). Upon waking, the Patriarch is said to have exclaimed, "What a terrifying place this is! It must be the house of God; it must be the gate that opens into heaven" (Gen. 28:17).

Now, the term "House of God" is precisely that used by the Sumerians to describe the shrine at the top of the ziggurats — which of course was also reached by a great stairway. Could we have a more clear-cut statement of context?

It should be remarked also that on another occasion Jacob is embroiled in a wrestling bout with God (Gen. 32:22-30). This again seems to recall very clearly the ritual combats of the Early Bronze Age, where the participants played the role of deities, and which ended in the sacrifice of one of the combatants.

Finally, it cannot be overlooked that the Patriarchs, even the most historical of them (whom we shall argue was Joseph), display all of the characteris-

⁶⁸ Rice, *Egypt's Making* (1990) p. 181.

tics of gods. This point was emphasized by Albright.⁶⁹ When we are dealing with the Patriarchs we are not in the historical era proper but in what might be called the era of “proto-history”: a primitive epoch predating the appearance of historical consciousness. This is evident enough even in the Book of Genesis, where editors of the Hellenistic age have clearly made efforts to make the characters as human as possible. But it is beyond question when we consider extra-biblical Jewish tradition. Thus for example in the various Talmudic and Midrashic traditions we learn that even the story of Joseph is replete with cosmogenic imagery. When Judah confronts his brother Joseph over the detention of Benjamin, the combatants become possessed of fearsome powers. We are told that “Manasseh stamped his foot on the ground and the whole palace shook.”⁷⁰ Later, we are told how Judah broke into sobs and cried aloud,

and when Hushim the son of Dan heard it in Canaan, he jumped into Egypt with a single leap and joined his voice with Judah’s, and the whole land was on the point of collapsing from the great noise they produced. Judah’s radiant men lost their teeth, and the cities of Pithom and Raamses were destroyed, and they remained in ruins until the Israelites built them up again under taskmasters.⁷¹

In addition to these and various other examples of prodigious, inhuman power, the Patriarchs are routinely associated in the legends with celestial beings. Thus Judah is, famously, “the Lion” (i.e. Leo), whilst Joseph, with whom he contends, is “the Bull” (Taurus).

These characters are, in some ways at least, celestial deities. Only one, Jacob’s son Joseph, may be regarded as at least partly historical. But, living in the Age of Myths, when the gods interacted on an everyday basis with mortals, even he underwent a process of deification. The Patriarch age is therefore without question one that must be placed in the remote past, at the very dawn, perhaps, of historical consciousness. As we shall now demonstrate, Abraham himself, the founding father of the Jewish Patriarchs, is no more to be regarded as a real human being than his children and grandchildren. In all essentials, in fact, Abraham is identical to the god whom the ancients believed had bequeathed the arts of civilization to mankind.

69 William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: An Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (New York, 1968).

70 L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1909) Vol.1 p. 104.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

MENES, ABRAHAM AND THE GOD THOTH

If the Age of the Patriarchs begins right at the start of the epoch known to historians as the Early Dynastic Age, we are on much stronger grounds when we declare that the biblical story of Abraham is a traditional account of the epic population movement disclosed by archeology right at the beginning of the literate age. The Jewish chroniclers, it would appear, were absolutely right to have Abraham teach the Egyptians the essentials of civilization and make him a contemporary of the first pharaoh.

This is not to say that Abraham, or even Menes, were historical characters. Both are essentially founder-deities, though presumably the Mesopotamian migrants would have had some leader — upon whom no doubt the attributes of the great deity of the age would have been placed in the popular imagination. The same may be said of Menes. That there was, at some point, a king who actually united the country and made himself master of Upper and Lower Egypt is beyond question. But the other deeds credited to Menes, which we shall discuss presently, belong to the tutelary god of the epoch.

Placing these two characters in the same cultural epoch we must therefore expect them to display strong similarities. Are these exhibited by them?

In fact, the parallels between Menes and Abraham are numerous and precise. On an obvious level, both men were believed to have lived at the dawn of civilization, and were linked (in terms of character and personality) to Thoth, or Hermes/Mercury, the god who bequeathed civilization to mankind. Thus for example Egyptian tradition told how the art of writing, along with the science of medicine, dated from Menes' time.⁷² More specifically, Manetho associated the invention of medicine with Menes' son and successor Athothis. This king's name, rendered as Teta or Teti in the hieroglyphics, honors the god Thoth, and indeed Thoth held a prominent position throughout the early period. In Manetho's testimony at least two kings of Dynasty I were named in honor of him. Now Thoth, the Egyptian equivalent of Hermes/Mercury, was universally regarded as the patron of learning. According to the Egyptians, Thoth had invented languages,⁷³ as well as writing and medicine. The Greeks, who were very insistent that Thoth was identical to their own Hermes, regarded the latter as one of the oldest of the gods.

⁷² Diodorus Siculus, i, 45, 1 and i, 94, 1.

⁷³ The invention of languages links Thoth with the Tower of Babel story and thus also with Abraham.

He had a frivolous and impetuous nature, and, it was suggested, could be destructive. It was said that he assisted the Three Fates in the invention of writing, astronomy, the musical scale, the arts of boxing and gymnastics, weights and measures and the cultivation of the olive tree.⁷⁴ In addition, he invented divination and was made the herald of Zeus. As such, his duties included the making of treaties and the promotion of commerce.

The symbol of Hermes/Thoth was a staff entwined with coiled serpents (an extremely popular motif in Early Dynastic Egypt and Mesopotamia) and in the classical world he was worshipped in orgiastic rituals around a standing phallic stone, or *herme*. Again, this ties him to Menes, whose name (Mena) clearly links him to the phallic god Min, as well as to the ritual of circumcision. Now Egyptian tradition never specifically states that the custom of circumcision was inaugurated by Menes, but in view of the fact that Min's cult was of immense importance during the First Dynasty, and in view of the other innovations attributed to the first pharaoh, we can scarcely doubt that the ritual dates from this period.⁷⁵

Here of course we have a direct link with Abraham, whose phallic nature is clearly expressed in his inauguration of circumcision, his name ("father of a multitude"), and in his association with the probably ritual homosexuality of Sodom.⁷⁶

It has already been shown how Hermes, or Thoth, was particularly linked by the Egyptians with Menes' epoch. The evidence linking Thoth/Hermes and Menes is quite comprehensive, but the link with Abraham is perhaps even more so. In Hebrew legend Abraham plays the role allocated to Thoth/Hermes in the traditions of other ancient peoples.

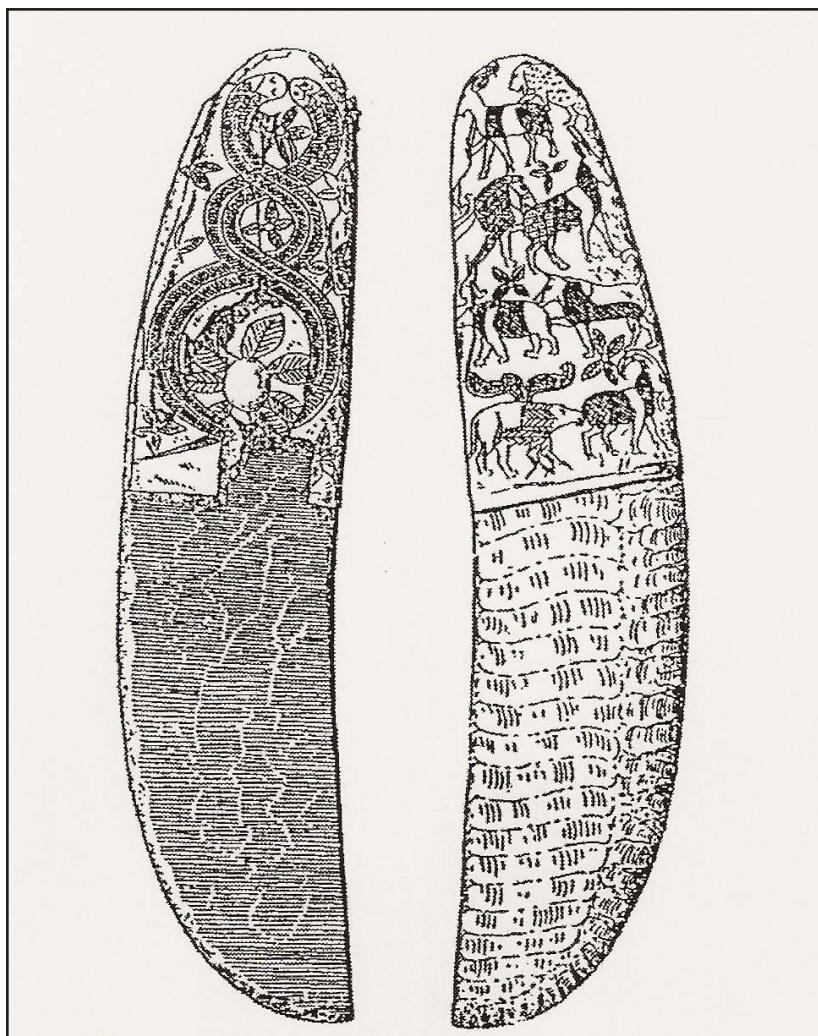
As we have said, Thoth/Hermes was accredited with communicating civilization to mankind. Like Abraham, he promoted learning, and like Abraham, he was particularly linked to the study of astronomy/astrology and mathematics. These traditions imply religious innovation and both characters were associated with new forms of worship.

74 Diodorus Siculus, v, 75; Hyginus, *Fabula* 277.

75 Min was always portrayed with an erect penis, so our attributing circumcision to his cult and his epoch is hardly open to question.

76 See G.R. Harvey, "Abraham and Phallicism," *Society for Interdisciplinary Studies, Chronology and Catastrophism Workshop* (1998) No.2 pp. 10-12.

FIGURE 10. FLINT KNIFE OF THE EARLY DYNASTIC OR PREDYNASTIC EPOCH.

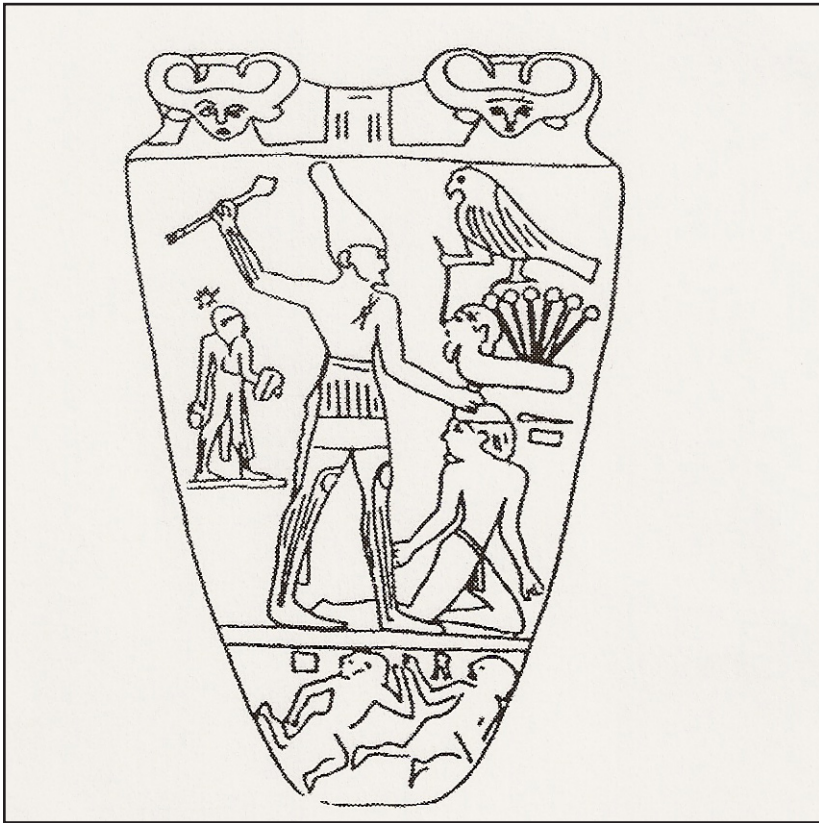


Note: The handle is of sheet gold, with designs in repoussé. The interlinking serpents are symbols of the god Thoth/Hermes. Weapons such as this would have been used for sacrifice and circumcision from the Abraham epoch until after the Exodus.

One of the most important innovations attributed to Hermes — and here the link with Abraham becomes even more clear — was that of flesh sacrifice. The Greeks told how Hermes, in his infancy, had stolen some cattle from Apollo (the sun). Upon being discovered and accused before Zeus, the newly born god admitted the charge, adding that he had already slaughtered

two, cutting them into twelve equal portions as a sacrifice to the twelve gods. According to the Greek writers this was the first flesh sacrifice ever made.⁷⁷ We are immediately reminded here, of course, of Abraham's abortive sacrifice of Isaac, and the evidence presented in the previous section should convince most readers that the Abraham epoch was *par excellence* the age of flesh sacrifice.

FIGURE II. THE VICTORY PALETTE OF KING NARMER.



Note: It is said to commemorate the union of Upper and Lower Egypt. Narmer was also known as Mena (Menes), a name which probably means "Min's man," Min being the phallic god in whose honor circumcision was first practised and who was one of the most important gods in Predynastic Egypt.

The practice of flesh (and more especially human) sacrifice, along with the construction of temples within which to perform these, was, as noted in

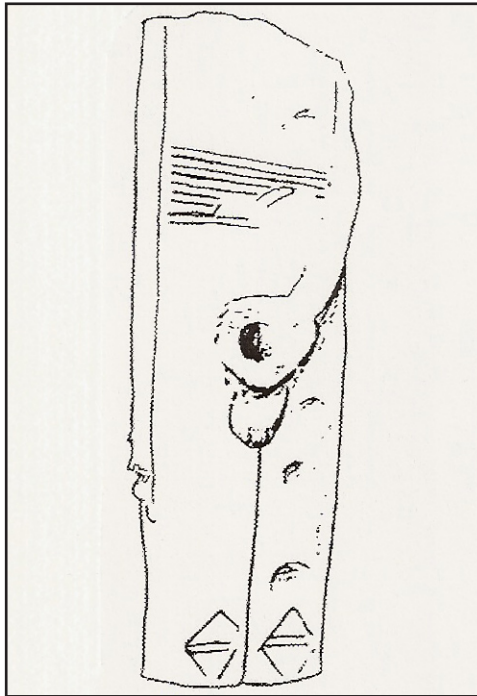
⁷⁷ Apollodorus, iii, 10, 2; *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 1-543.

the previous chapter, one of the characteristic features of the earliest epoch of civilization. Flesh sacrifice had a propitiatory function, and if we remember that this was an era still afflicted by vast upheavals of nature, we can well understand the origin of this need.

In summary, then, Abraham and Menes share at least three very outstanding features:

- Both characters were credited with initiating civilized life and with being cultural innovators.
- Both were believed to have introduced new forms of religious worship, including, almost certainly, flesh sacrifice.
- Both were associated with circumcision and were linked to a phallic cult.

FIGURE 12. ONE OF THE THREE LATE PREDYNASTIC/
EARLY DYNASTIC STATUES OF MIN
(discovered by Petrie at Koptos)



Note: Min was perhaps the most important deity in the early dynastic epoch, and there seems little doubt that Menes, who initiated sacrifice (including presumably circumcision), was little more than an euhemerization of Min.

Both share virtually all of the above features with the god Thoth (also Min)/Hermes, who in Egyptian and Greek tradition laid the foundations of civilized life.

The cosmogonic meaning of the myths and customs relating to this early epoch of human civilization is a question that needs to be examined in somewhat greater depth.

THE CELESTIAL TOWER

The most obvious parallel between the age of Menes and that of Abraham is that both were marked by great upheavals of nature. Herodotus and Manetho, as well as other ancient authors, hinted strongly at such events in First Dynasty times.⁷⁸ Manetho says that Menes was eventually killed by a hippopotamus — a death almost certainly referring to upheavals of nature, as the hippopotamus deity must be linked to the crocodile god Sebek, or the Double Crocodile Henti, who symbolized the universal destruction said to occur at the end of a world cycle.⁷⁹

Hebrew tradition is, if anything, even more explicit about natural catastrophes during the time of Abraham. Both Abraham and the later Patriarchs were uprooted from their homes by devastating famines on more than one occasion. Indeed, it was a famine that brought Abraham and the Hebrews into Egypt for the first time. We are told that a few years after this episode the twin cities of the Dead Sea plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, met a frightening fate. The story of this disaster is one of the most popular tales from the Old Testament. Lot, Abraham's bother, was advised to flee the city of Sodom before its merited destruction:

The sun had risen on the earth when Lot entered Segor. The Lord poured down on Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. He overthrew those cities and the whole region, all the inhabitants of the cities and the plants of the soil.⁸⁰

Other translations have the agents of destruction as “fire and brimstone”, but whatever caused the damage, it clearly came from the sky. The region in which Sodom and Gomorrah stood, near the shores of the Dead Sea, is described as a fertile plain prior to the catastrophe. Afterwards, it was a barren waste. What manner of disaster could pour “sulphur and fire” on a city? Being unable to answer this question, commentators throughout the centuries

⁷⁸ Similar suggestions are found in Eratosthenes and Diodorus Siculus.

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Brendan Stannard, *The Origins of Israel and Mankind* (Lancashire, 1983) p. 761.

⁸⁰ Genesis 19: 23-5.

have doubted the existence of the two cities of sin. According to the biblical account, they were situated just to the south of the Dead Sea, an area that is now a wasteland. Not a single trace of any settlement that may have been either of the towns has been discovered.⁸¹

As an answer to this question, some historians have postulated an immense and extremely powerful series of volcanic eruptions, as proof of which they point to the volcanic nature of the region, and to the fact that the entire Dead Sea/Jordan Valley depression is but a branch of the highly active Great Rift Valley that separates Asia from Africa.⁸² All around the northern shores of the Dead Sea there is ample evidence, in the large deposits of pumice, of recent and severe volcanic activity. However, attempts to explain the cataclysms of the Abraham epoch in terms of the types of natural calamities ordinarily inflicted upon the planet by nature, can only be sustained by ignoring a great deal of the evidence. As we saw in the previous chapter, the catastrophes which affected the earth in the first epoch of civilization were of a magnitude and severity far beyond anything in the experience of modern man. This is a fact insisted upon both by the traditions of the ancients and by the discoveries of science.

If we wish to understand this epoch, and to comprehend the nature and character of the figure we know as Abraham, we will need to look seriously at those traditions.

Consistently, in every part of the globe, legend tells us how in the aftermath of the Flood a race of demigods (or sometimes giants) attempted to reopen communications with heaven by raising an enormous tower or pillar up to the sky. This Tower is sometimes depicted as a crystal pillar, sometimes as an enormous tree with branches reaching out to the four quarters. Usually it is located at the North Pole (the latter name itself being derived from the legend). Around the Pole or Pillar a great dragon-serpent was believed to be entwined. This creature was known to the Greeks as Ladon or Latone, and to the Phoenicians as Lotan (biblical Leviathan). Following a cataclysmic confrontation between the giants who raised the pillar and the gods, the pillar is smashed and destroyed, and communication between earth and heaven is brought to a definitive end. The destruction of the pillar

81 However, it may be that Sodom and Gomorrah were situated in an area that was subsequently flooded by the Dead Sea. See, e.g., Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (London, 1980) pp. 90-2.

82 The Great Rift Valley forms the Red Sea and runs as far south as Lake Victoria in Africa.

was accompanied by chaos in the firmament among the planetary deities, as well as by vast upheavals of nature on the earth.

That this is a tradition every bit as universal as that of the Flood itself is apparent from mythologies on every continent. As an example, consider the following account from Mexico, mentioned by Velikovsky in his unpublished work *In the Beginning*. After narrating the story of the Flood which brought to a close the first world age, Ixtlilxochitl described the catastrophe which ended the second age or Ehecatonatiuh, the “sun of wind”.

And as men were thereafter multiplying they constructed a very high and strong *Zacualli*, which means ‘a very high tower’ in order to protect themselves when again the second world should be destroyed. At the crucial moment their languages were changed, and as they did not understand one another, they went into different parts of the worlds.⁸³

A very similar story, Velikovsky noted, is recorded in Polynesia. On the island of Hao, for instance, part of the Puamotu islands, it was said that after a great Flood the sons of Rata, who had survived the disaster, made an attempt to erect a building by which they sought to reach the sky and see the creator god Vatea. “But the god in anger chased the builders away, broke down the building, and changed their language, so that they spoke divers tongues.”⁸⁴ A seemingly identical account comes from the sacred book of the Mayas, the *Popol Vuh*, which relates how the language of all the families gathered at the sacred spot of Tulan was confused, so that none could understand the speech of the others.⁸⁵ Again, traditions from southern Arabia speak of an upheaval of nature, followed by confusion of languages and migrations.⁸⁶

Elsewhere I have discussed this myth in detail.⁸⁷ Suffice to note here that the story constitutes a vital element in the Abraham myth. The biblical Tower of Babel, which is placed immediately before the story of Abraham in Genesis, is the Hebrew version of the Celestial Pillar. The phallus cult of Abraham’s time is a human reaction to the destruction of the Celestial Pillar (as is circumcision — the voluntary mutilation of man’s own “pillar”). Abraham’s nephew Lot is the Phoenician dragon-deity Lotan who entwines himself around the Pillar, whilst the crystal pillar into which Lot’s wife is transformed is the Celestial Pillar itself.

83 Don Fernando de Alvara, “Ixtlilxochitl,” *Obras Historicas* (Mexico, 1891) Vol.1 p. 12.

84 R.W. Williamson, *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs of Central Polynesia* (Cambridge, 1933) Vol.1 p. 94.

85 Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilizes du Mexique* (1857-59) Vol. 1, p. 72.

86 Johann J. Reiske, *De Arabum Epocha Vetustissima, Sail Ol Arem id est Ruptura Catarrhatae Marebensis Dicta* (Leipzig, 1748).

87 In my *Arthur and Stonehenge* (2001).

It was this Pillar, by which the demigods attempted to reopen communication with the heavens, with its entwined serpent, that gave rise to the symbol of Hermes/Thoth's magic wand, the caduceus. The same Pillar is depicted in a thousand artifacts from all over the Near East, some of which portray the intertwined dragons as long-necked lionesses. This motif was particularly popular in Egypt. In time, the serpent-necks of the lionesses disappeared, to be replaced simply by a pillar guarded by two felines, a motif most famously illustrated in the Lion Gate at Mycenae. It should be noted too that these guardian felines are the prototype sphinx, the lioness-goddess Sekhmet to whom human beings were sacrificed.

What then was the Tower? Clearly it was not a human construction. Of recent years it has been suggested by more than one author that the Tower or Tree was some form of electrical plasma funnel, which appeared over the northern Pole in the wake of the earlier Flood cataclysm. This latter event had somehow electrically "charged" the planet. A second encounter with a cosmic body, some centuries later, had produced an enormous connective spark, or thunderbolt, which neutralized the terrestrial electrical charge and simultaneously caused the disappearance of the Pillar. Clearly the legends which recount the Tower's destruction (with a divine thunderbolt), seem to speak of some electro-magnetic event. And this brings us to the stories, both biblical and from other regions, which speak of a confusion of tongues in the wake of the catastrophe. In a recently published article, "Dysphasia in Genesis?", Englishman David Salkeld discusses the question from a novel point of view. Having himself recently suffered a stroke along with temporary loss of the power of speech, Salkeld notes that when "specific areas of the human brain are targeted by an electrical current (using electrodes) it results in a partial loss of memory." Furthermore, "if a group of mountaineers are caught in an electrical storm and a bolt of lightning strikes, the group could temporarily suffer a partial dysphasia."⁸⁸ "Could a huge electrical current have struck the tower of Babel ... and the builders of the tower have suffered dysphasia, so they could not understand one another's speech?", Salkeld asks.

But it was not, it seems, a small human-made tower built in Mesopotamia that the divine thunderbolt struck. It was the celestial Tower of the northern Pole.

88 D. Salkeld, "Old Testament Tale XI: Dysphasia in Genesis?" *Society for Interdisciplinary Studies, Chronology and Catastrophism Workshop*, No. 1 (2007), pp. 9-10.

The cataclysm which destroys the Tower is the event which propels the inhabitants of Lower Mesopotamia westwards and northwards in search of new homes. The archeological record shows very clearly that the upheavals and floods which had destroyed the 'Ubaid culture in southern Mesopotamia had not suddenly ceased. On the contrary, the region continued to be afflicted by similar events (at least three in number) after the initial Great Flood. The cataclysm of the Tower was evidently the one which terminated the Jamdat Nasr culture, and the region was to suffer two more upheavals of the same magnitude before peace returned to the natural order. These were "after-effects" of the original Deluge. Again and again, it appears, a cosmic body came dangerously close to the earth. Tidal waves, caused both by earthquakes and disturbances in the planet's rotation, swept over the landmasses. Showers of meteorites bombarded the terrestrial sphere. Our entire planet, torn by the gravitational pull of the nearby body, went into gigantic tectonic convulsions. In the midst of this devastation, weather patterns changed radically, and famines (remembered throughout the entire Patriarch period) became widespread. Populations were uprooted and whole continents laid waste.

Lower Mesopotamia constitutes a vast plain, never rising more than a few feet above sea level. As such, it would have been particularly vulnerable to tidal waves sweeping in from the Indian Ocean (and Mesopotamian tradition has much to say about these floods). Evidently, following the catastrophic end of the Jamdat Nasr epoch, the inhabitants of the region came to the conclusion that the place, though fertile and well-watered, was no longer safe to inhabit: Hence the great migration in search of a Promised Land. We are told that Abraham's father was instructed by God to quit Ur, and we can scarcely doubt that the religious leaders of the epoch, who were the spokesmen of the gods, did indeed instruct the people in such a way.

The pristine lands of Arabia and Egypt, through which the Mesopotamian wanderers passed, were not the parched and arid wildernesses of our time. Stretching before the travelers lay vast and seemingly endless savannahs, teeming with game. The Egypt which they entered was a richly fertile land inhabited by a simple folk of Hamitic speech, who knew nothing of building in brick or stone, or of any of the finer arts of civilization. In time,

incomers and natives intermingled, and from that union arose the great and glorious Egypt known to us all.

THE "DIVINE LAND" OF THE EGYPTIANS

The Egyptians did not forget the great migration which brought civilization to their land. As might be expected, the ancestors of the Mesopotamian culture-bearers formed an aristocracy closely associated with the pharaoh — much in the same way the Normans constituted an aristocracy after the Conquest of England. This aristocracy was known as the *Iry-Pat*, and were clearly differentiated from the rest of the Egyptian population. From the ranks of the *Iry-Pat* came the Horus Kings of Hierakonpolis who founded the First Dynasty. These Horus Kings always claimed that their ancestral home had been in the east, in a region which they named the "Land of the God, or "Divine Land" (*Ta Netjer*), or Punt (*Pwenet*).

One of the most intriguing questions to emerge from ancient Egypt is the location of this "Divine Land", because on one level the term was clearly used to describe the land of Canaan, the area we now call Syria/Palestine.⁸⁹ For Christians and Jews, of course, Israel has been the Holy Land from time immemorial. Scholars did not however expect the Egyptians to call the same region by the same name.

Explanation of this remarkable coincidence has proved elusive. Some take a mundane view and see the Lebanese cedars as the source of the term, by reason of the fact that these plants were the source of some of the fragrant gums and resins used in the embalming process.⁹⁰ But this explanation is somewhat strained and has failed to gain universal support.

But the origin of the term Divine Land and its application to the regions of Asia closest to Egypt is a mystery we can now solve.

In ancient texts the term Divine Land, although fairly clearly used to denote Syria/Palestine, is usually also associated with Punt. In fact, the terms Punt and Divine Land are virtually interchangeable. Yet Punt, unlike the Divine Land, is not believed to be located in Syria/Palestine, but at the southern end of the Red Sea. This has caused profound confusion amongst Egyptologists. However, but for the illustrations in Queen Hatshepsut's temple

⁸⁹ See, e.g., Margaret S. Drower, "Syria Before 2200 BC," in *CAH* Vol.1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 346 "To the Egyptians, Byblos was the key to 'God's Land', the Lebanon on whose steep slopes grew the timber trees they coveted."

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 349. "As a source of the material used in mummification and for coffins, 'God's Land' would have held a special and sacred significance for the Egyptians."

at Deir el Bahri, which portray what appears to be African fauna in Punt, there is little doubt that the region would always have been associated with Syria/Palestine. For example, an official of the Sixth Dynasty described how he had visited Punt and Byblos eleven times.⁹¹ It is perfectly clear from this that the Egyptians regarded the two countries as adjacent. In actual fact, the name “Punt” is etymologically identical to “Phoenicia”. Classical sources inform us that the eponymous ancestor of the Phoenicians was called Pontus, and the word appears again in the “Punic” Wars waged between the Phoenician Carthaginians and the Romans. That the Phoenicians, like the Jews, originated in the Persian Gulf/Lower Mesopotamia region is hinted at in a number of ancient writers; whilst, as David Rohl has pointed out, Christian Lebanese to this day regard themselves as having originated in the coastlands of the Persian Gulf.⁹² Also, we need to consider the fact that two of the islands of Bahrain were originally called Aradus and Tylos (Tyros) — identical in name to two of the greatest Phoenician island cities.⁹³

Punt and the Divine Land were thus either Canaan and Phoenicia, or interchangeable names for the whole region of Palestine/Phoenicia. Once this is accepted, it provides us with a startling clue to the origin of the term Divine Land. In his book *The Making of Egypt* (1939) Flinders Petrie emphasizes the symbolic importance of Punt for the Egyptians. The Land of Punt, he says, was “sacred to the Egyptians as the source of the race.”⁹⁴ Right from the beginning, the Horus kings of the First Dynasty insisted that their ancestors had come from Punt. Yet Petrie, with equal certainty, derived the Punt people from Lower Mesopotamia. They had, he says, “certainly originated in Elam.”⁹⁵ Of course, we now know that the decisive culture-bearing immigration into Egypt immediately preceding the start of Dynasty 1 was not quite from Elam but from the adjacent region of Lower Mesopotamia, an immigration clearly recalled in the Abraham legend. The great “Abraham” migration, after touching on Egypt and giving birth to Egyptian civilization, eventually settled mainly in Palestine/Phoenicia and western Arabia — this, in the testimony of the archeologists. Genesis, we have seen, agrees with the

91 J. A. Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1934) p. 176 n.28.

92 Rohl, *Legend: The Genesis of Civilisation* (1998) p. 305.

93 Ibid.

94 Petrie, *The Making of Egypt* (1939) p. 77.

95 Ibid.

archeology, for the Arabs were reputed to be descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael.

The Divine Land of the Egyptians was therefore identical to the Holy Land of the Jews, the Promised Land pledged by God as the home of Abraham's descendants. The pharaohs of Egypt's First Dynasty were of the same blood-line as the Hebrews (and this is almost certainly recalled in the story of Sarai's marriage to the pharaoh, as well as Abraham's marriage to the Egyptian Hagar), so it is little wonder that they too called Palestine by this name.

Truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

One possible objection to the above assertion may be raised. The term *ta netjer*, it might be argued, is more accurately translated as "Land of the God" (rather than "Divine Land"), and it is true that the word Netjer ("god") was peculiarly associated with Osiris,⁹⁶ a deity who was especially linked with Byblos and the Lebanon. According to Egyptian tradition, Osiris' body was floated down the Nile in a wooden casket and washed ashore at Byblos. For this reason Byblos was sacred to Osiris and his cult. In short, Palestine/Phoenicia was the "Divine Land" not because of ancient associations with Mesopotamian culture-bearers, but because of the region's connection with Osiris.

Yet this explanation is flawed. If we accept it, we must then question why the legend associated Osiris with an Asiatic region at all. In fact, Osiris' connection with Asia is not accidental, and derives from the fact, highlighted, as we saw, by David Rohl, that Osiris himself was an Asiatic deity, one of the gods brought to Egypt by the early Mesopotamian culture-bearing migration, by the Abraham migration, no less!

It is evident then that the term Ta Netjer ("Land of the God") does refer to Palestine/Phoenicia's links to Osiris, yet it is equally evident that Osiris himself, a deity originating in Lower Mesopotamia, is linked to Asia because of an Egyptian racial memory of a migration which brought their ancestors from that region.

There remains the problem of the Hatshepsut reliefs, which apparently place Punt and the Divine Land somewhere in Africa.

⁹⁶ See, e.g., S. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* (Cornell University Press, 1973) p. 19.

I do not intend to go into this question in any detail here, for it is essentially outside the scope of the present work. Nevertheless, a brief examination of the problem is inevitable.

To begin with, it should be remarked that Immanuel Velikovsky, for other reasons entirely, located the land of Punt in Palestine/Phoenicia. He also made Hatshepsut identical to the fabulous Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon in Jerusalem, and regarded the bas-reliefs at Deir el Bahri as a commemoration of that visit. The present writer concurs entirely with Velikovsky on this issue, though the identification has been criticized even by some of Velikovsky's most loyal students. It has been pointed out, for example, that typical African animals (such as giraffe and hippopotamus) are shown inhabiting Punt, whilst many of the inhabitants appear to be negroes. Nevertheless, it is simply untrue to say that the natives are negroes. Most of the inhabitants of Punt, as portrayed at Deir el Bahri, appear to be Semitic or such like, and the men sport long pointed beards of a type worn in Egypt *only by the pharaoh* (we recall here the Puntite origins of the Egyptian ruling class). The African fauna can be equally easily explained. Giraffes and hippos lived in Egypt until Old Kingdom times, and, according to a number of sources, giraffes still inhabited the border regions of Syria and Arabia until Roman times.⁹⁷ Similarly, hippopotami seem to have lived in the marshlands of Lake Hula, to the north of Galilee, until a comparatively recent age. As I have shown elsewhere, in antiquity, the Syria/Palestine region supported all of the creatures now more typically associated with the African savannah. These gradually became extinct through a combination of hunting and climate change. Yet in the time of Hatshepsut many of them survived, especially in the Lebanese uplands. One didn't need to go as far as Somalia to find such creatures.

As for the negroes pictured on Hatshepsut's temple, we are all too aware of how Africa was plundered for slaves almost from time immemorial.

The Deir el Bahri inscriptions describe Punt as a source of *anti*, or incense, a plant which is said to grow on "the terraces." Since nowadays incense grows only to the south of Egypt, in southern Arabia and the Horn of Africa, this was seen as providing definitive proof of an African location. Yet the Lebanese Mountains have been terraced from antiquity and indeed one of the Egyptian names for these was "the steps" or "the terraces." Elsewhere

⁹⁷ Diodorus Siculus, ii, 50-1.

I have presented detailed proofs that incense was cultivated in Lebanon during pharaonic times, and it should be noted that the Hebrew/Phoenician word for “incense” is actually *lebana*.⁹⁸ Furthermore, it should be noted that in Greek legend Adonis (a god recognized by the Hellenes as belonging to Lebanon — his name is identical to Hebrew *Adonai*, “the Lord,” a title of Tammuz), was born out of a myrrh tree.⁹⁹

Hatshepsut identified herself as a daughter of Hathor, her tutelary deity, and Hathor was described in Egyptian texts as the “Lady of Punt.”¹⁰⁰ Yet Hathor was also known as the “Lady of Byblos.” Why should this be the case, if Punt and Byblos were not adjacent, or even identical? We remind ourselves too that the Byblos region was also known as *Ta Netjer*, “Land of the God,” and Punt too was called *Ta Netjer*.

Why Hathor should be associated with Phoenicia is of interest. In his own myth, the goddess was commissioned by Ra to destroy the human race, but desisted when the sun god poured a red-colored wine over the whole earth, which Hathor drank in the belief that she was consuming the blood of humanity. Becoming intoxicated with the wine, she left off the work of destruction. Now, the Greek word Phoenicia has a root meaning “crimson,” and this apparently is related to the Hathor myth and her association with the region. We should note too that in early summer the Lebanese Mountains take on a deep scarlet hue as the anemones which cover the range come into bloom.

As well as the evidence identifying Punt, the Divine Land, with Palestine, there is equally compelling evidence for linking Hatshepsut with the Queen of Sheba. And, once again, not all of this evidence was examined by Velikovsky. Here are some of the points he missed.

The biblical scribe talked of the Queen of Sheba because the capital of Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty was called Sheba. It has always been a mystery why the Greeks named the capital of Egypt Thebes, especially since the hieroglyphic experts decreed the name to be *Waset*. However, as Brad Aaronson of Israel has pointed out, hieroglyphic names are frequently not pronounced exactly as they are written, and often the order of words has

⁹⁸ See my *Empire of Thebes* (New York, 2006).

⁹⁹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, x.

¹⁰⁰ There thus seems little doubt that the expedition to Punt was for Hatshepsut a pilgrimage, a voyage home — even if she never, as is usually believed — took part in the journey.

more to do with religious sensibilities or aesthetics than anything else. Consider for example the fact that Tutankhamun's name actually appears in the hieroglyphs as Amen-tut-ankh. If the hieroglyphic Waset or Wase is properly reconstructed as She(t)wa, then a whole host of problems are solved. First and foremost, we know why Josephus named the capital of Ethiopia as Sheba. Secondly, we know where the Greeks got Thebes (Theba). Many languages mutate "s" into "th" (lispings), and the Greeks apparently received the name, already lisped into Theba, from the Phoenicians. Thirdly, we know why another great cult-center of the god Amon, Siwa, got its name.

Velikovsky assembled a huge body of interrelated evidence identifying Hatshepsut with the Queen of Sheba and Punt with Israel/Phoenicia. Since Sheba was the name of Egypt's capital in Hatshepsut's time, and since the other evidence makes this woman a contemporary of the early Israelite kings, it seems extremely unlikely to me that she could have come from anywhere other than Egypt. (The Queen is accorded a huge amount of space in the Old Testament. She was evidently the representative of a major power, not some desert principality). Also, she is called the Queen of the South, and elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g., in the Book of Daniel) the King of the South is very explicitly identified as the king of Egypt.

All in all then it looks as if Velikovsky got it exactly correct and that the Divine Land of the Egyptians was so called because it was the source of the culture-bearing immigrants (the Abraham tribe) who had founded Egypt's First Dynasty.

DATES AND CHRONOLOGIES

The First Dynasty of Egypt, as we have demonstrated, must belong in the same epoch as the figure known to the Bible as Abraham, yet according to conventional ideas the first pharaoh reigned around 3300 or 3200 BC, whilst Abraham is dated to circa 2000 BC. If we are correct and these two characters were indeed contemporary, then we are involved in a radical questioning of ancient chronology. Assuming that Abraham's epoch is correctly dated to 2000 BC, this means that Egyptian history must also commence at that point and that the thousand years separating Abraham and Menes in the textbooks are "ghost" centuries.

Yet the situation is made infinitely worse when we realize that Abraham's date is itself untrustworthy and that the nine or ten centuries separating the

Patriarch from the founding of Solomon's temple are equally phantom. In fact, the date of 2000 BC, still accepted in most textbooks, is arrived at, as we saw, by accepting at face value the dates provided in the early books of the Old Testament for the various Patriarchs and Judges. These sources allot life spans of up to 175 years for the earlier Patriarchs; and it is on such a basis that the date of 2000 BC is reached!

As a matter of fact, the fundamental unreliability of virtually all the dates and figures provided in the Old Testament has been demonstrated repeatedly over the past century and a half. The Old Testament was composed by scribes who followed a pious numerology, and very few of the dates and figures provided can be accepted at face value. The number 40, it has been shown, was regarded as especially sacred. So too were compounds of 40, as well as of 400. Thus the 400-plus years which separated Joseph from the Exodus, and the 480 years between the Exodus and the building of the temple in Jerusalem, are in no way to be taken as historical. On hindsight, it is quite astonishing that such sacred formulae could ever have been mistaken for anything else.

Before moving on, it is perhaps ironic to note that even a fundamentalist interpretation of the Old Testament could not support conventional dates. Thus in the Gospel of Matthew a genealogy is provided for Jesus aimed at demonstrating his descent both from Abraham and David. From Abraham to Jesus the evangelist lists 42 generations. Now, allowing 25 years to a generation (a generous figure for ancient times), this would place Abraham around 1050 BC! Although these generations cannot be regarded as historical (certainly those preceding David, at any rate), it so happens that this date is very close — it has to be admitted, by pure accident — to the date which will be proposed by the present writer.

As we have seen, the discrepancies observed in the historiographies of Egypt and Israel are also reflected in the archeology. Strata which in Egypt and Mesopotamia are dated to the fourth and third millennia BC, are dated in Syria/Palestine to the beginning of the second millennium BC. The post-Flood strata of Egypt and Mesopotamia, for example, dated in the latter two regions to between 3400 and 3200 BC, is dated in Syria/Palestine to around 2200 BC. Later strata are equally inconsistently dated. Thus the Syrian Middle Bronze 2 stratum, dated between 1700 and 1500 BC, and containing Hyksos material, corresponds both in culture and stratigraphy with the

Mesopotamian Early Bronze 3, which is generally dated between 2300 and 2200 BC (the Akkadian epoch). We find then that the Hyksos of Syria/Palestine were actually contemporary with the Mesopotamian Akkadians, who are generally dated seven centuries earlier. This means that the Akkadians or the Hyksos (or both) have been grossly misplaced.

There are very good reasons why this (roughly) thousand year gap appears in both archeology and historiography. The archeologists in fact were working with a time-scale which was ultimately (though few modern archeologists are now aware of this) based upon the chronology provided in the Book of Genesis. If we wish to discover exactly when the First Dynasty of Egypt reigned (and, by extension, when the epoch of Abraham should be placed), we must completely ignore the dates provided in the Bible as well as the dates provided by Egyptologists and Assyriologists, which are in fact also derived, one way or another, from the Bible. Having done that, we will find that an overwhelming body of evidence suggests that no literate civilization existed anywhere prior to the 11th century BC, and that the great cultures and peoples said by the textbooks to have flourished in the second and third millennia are “ghosts” or “phantoms”: cultures and peoples who only ever existed in textbooks.

In another place I have shown in some detail — following the work of Professor Gunnar Heinsohn — how the erroneous chronologies of Egypt and Mesopotamia were formulated.¹⁰¹ There it is demonstrated how the chronology of the ancient Near East was put together using three quite separate dating blueprints, each a replica of the other, which produced in the end an actual triplication of ancient history. There was the history of the region known to the classical authors, covering the first millennium BC, which was in fact the true history of the region. A duplicate history, placed in the second millennium, was then supplied by applying material from Egypt, and another phantom history, this time placed in the third millennium, was supplied by cross-referencing with Mesopotamian material. Thus the Akkadians of the third millennium are in fact stratigraphically contemporary with (and identical to) the Hyksos of the second millennium; and both are one and the same as the Assyrians of the first millennium BC.

¹⁰¹ In my *Pyramid Age* (1999).

A great deal of evidence, from many fields (quite apart from the stratigraphic), would in any case suggest that early Egyptian and Mesopotamian culture could not possibly be dated to the third millennium BC. As a matter of fact, scholars are astonished at the achievements of the Egyptians during the earliest epoch of her civilization. The natives of the Nile Valley, it appears, performed feats of engineering and art far in advance of what should have been expected in the third and fourth millennia BC.

Trade relationships, it seems, had been established between Egypt and Europe during the Early Dynastic Age, and merchants travelled immense distances to bring luxury items to adorn the palaces and tombs of the pharaohs. We have noted too that even before the founding of the First Dynasty, lapis-lazuli from the borders of Pakistan had reached Egypt in considerable quantities. Thus also gold used in the jewelry of Khasekhemwy (Dynasty 2) was found to have originated in the Carpathian Mountains in Romania.¹⁰² Such far-reaching links appear to be out of the question in the early third millennium BC (the date normally given for Khasekhemwy). The arrival in Egypt of gold from north of the Danube speaks of a highly developed system of international trade, some of it apparently conducted by sea. And this impression is further reinforced by the discovery in Early Bronze Age Troy, Troy II, the city destroyed in the great cataclysm, of artifacts made of tin-bronze.¹⁰³ The only sources of tin known to the ancient world were in Europe: Bohemia and the Atlantic west, northern Spain and Britain. It is generally assumed that the first tin to reach the Near East was from Bohemia, yet mineralogist John Dayton has argued persuasively for Britain as the primary source of the material: mainly due to the fact that in Britain, and here alone, tin and copper are found together in the ground, already mixed, in ore-form.¹⁰⁴ For Dayton, the evidence says that true bronze was invented in Britain, and nowhere else, which, if correct, means that the bronze of Troy II almost certainly reached Anatolia by sea trade.

We note, too, that Schliemann discovered a lump of nephrite, or white jade, in Troy II, a material that could only have come from the Kunlun Mountains on the borders of China.¹⁰⁵

102 See A. R. Burn, *Minoans, Philistines and Greeks* (London, 1930) p. 73.

103 J. Mellaart, "Anatolia: c.4000-2300 BC," in *CAH* Vol.2 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 392.

104 John Dayton, *Minerals, Metals, Glazing, and Man* (London, 1978).

105 Burn, loc cit. p. 72.

The idea then that the Early Bronze Age (or, more accurately, the Early Dynastic Age) was an epoch of tiny, isolated, and entirely self-sufficient city-states and kingdoms needs to be abandoned. The civilizations of this time were highly-evolved, enterprising and largely literate. And this last is a point that needs to be stressed. With the discovery of the (unfortunately) little-known writing-system of the Vinca culture of Neolithic-Early Bronze Age Europe (the most famous example of whose script are the so-called Tartaria Tablets from Romania), we can now say that the art of writing was known from Mesopotamia through to Egypt, to (almost certainly) Anatolia and the Balkans, and very possibly throughout North Africa and western Europe — if certain ciphers on Neolithic pottery from Portugal are anything to go by.¹⁰⁶

Yet how are such achievements to be explained if Menes and the Early Dynastic epoch be placed in the late fourth and early third millennium BC? The vast reach of trade, as far, apparently, as Britain and China, must be viewed too in tandem with the extraordinary levels reached by technology. Some of the most damning evidence has come from the pen of mineralogist John Dayton. In his exhaustive *Minerals, Metals, Glazing, and Man* (1978), Dayton looked with a specialist's eye at the development of metallurgy and pottery manufacture and referred repeatedly to the advanced metallurgical and glazing techniques evident in finds of the Early Dynastic and Pyramid Ages. Iron, for example, appears to have been widely used from the Pyramid Age (supposedly commencing circa 2600 BC.) onwards,¹⁰⁷ and the Pyramid Texts are full of allusions to the metal.¹⁰⁸ Dayton noted that glass was known in the Early Dynastic period, the first recorded instance being a set of beads from a First Dynasty tomb. Yet tradition stated that glass was first manufactured by the Phoenicians, who did not exist as a nation before the first millennium BC.¹⁰⁹ Mention of the Phoenicians brings to mind the fact that these people were well-known to the Egyptians from the Pyramid Age onwards. Texts of the time refer to seagoing ships as *kbnwt* (Byblos boats),¹¹⁰ whilst King

106 According to T. Rice Holmes, "True writing is ... evident on a potsherd taken from a Neolithic settlement at Los Murcielagos in Portugal." *Ancient Britain and the Invasions of Julius Caesar* (Clarendon Press, 1907) pp. 99-100.

107 See, e.g., H. Garland and C.O. Bannister, *Ancient Egyptian Metallurgy* (London, 1927) p. 5.

108 See my *Pyramid Age* (2007 ed.).

109 Pliny, *Natural History* ii; John Dayton was very much concerned with the apparent contradictions in the whole account of glass-making as it is presented in the textbooks. op. cit.

110 Margaret S. Drower, "Syria Before 2200 BC," in *CAH* Vol.1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 348.

Sneferu of the Fourth Dynasty records the import of 40 shiploads of cedar from Lebanon.¹¹¹

I could go on, but the above should suffice to illustrate the point. Not only is the millennium said to separate Abraham (2000 BC) from Menes (3200 BC) a phantom; so too is the millennium said to separate Abraham from the founding of the world's other great civilizations (those of China, eastern India and the Americas), which are not dated with reference to the chronology of the Near East. These civilizations arose around 1000 BC, or shortly beforehand, and it is regarded as remarkable that the Near Eastern civilizations had a two thousand year "head start" over them. Yet there was no head start. All the world's mound- and pyramid-building cultures arose around 1100 BC in direct response to the cosmic events then occurring

¹¹¹ W. Stevenson Smith, "The Old Kingdom of Egypt and the Beginning of the First Intermediate Period," in *CAH* Vol.1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 167.

CHAPTER 3. KING DJOSER AND HIS TIME

SETTING THE SCENE

Having placed the founding of Egyptian civilization in the same epoch as the biblical Abraham and therefore having fixed the start of Egypt's and Israel's semi-legendary history at the same point in time, the 11th century BC, we must now attempt a reconstruction of the two histories along the new chronological lines. If we are on the right track, we might expect the histories of the two neighboring peoples, which have hitherto shown few signs of agreement, to match closely. Hebrew tradition tells us how for two centuries or so after Abraham, the patriarch's tribe was settled in Canaan, where his grandson Jacob was blessed with twelve sons. One of these, Joseph, the youngest and favorite, aroused his brothers' jealousy, was sold as a slave and taken into Egypt. In Egypt his fortunes improved dramatically when his ability to interpret dreams came to the notice of the pharaoh. He soon became the king's most trusted advisor and brought the entire Israelite tribe into Egypt during a momentous famine. Joseph was thus an exceptional person whose life-story became a symbol of how God could raise the lowly from the dung-heap. No less than a quarter of the Book of Genesis is devoted to him.

Now we ask ourselves, did the Egyptians remember Joseph or does Egyptian tradition know of any character whom we could possibly identify with him? More specifically, does Egyptian tradition of the Early Dynastic period know of anyone identifiable with Joseph? The answer is a resounding yes!

It so happens that two centuries or so after the establishment of the united kingdom under Menes there lived the greatest sage of Egypt's history: this was Imhotep, the godlike vizier of King Djoser.

Before looking at the truly remarkable parallels between Joseph and Imhotep, we need first to say something about Djoser, for he was accorded a place in Egyptian tradition almost as important as that of Imhotep himself.

Djoser, or Zoser, the second king of Manetho's Third Dynasty, occurs in the monuments under the title Netjerkhet. The name Djoser, which means 'The Wise', was only conferred upon him long after his death. Much scholarly debate has centered round Djoser. He is, for example, commonly believed to have been the first Early Dynastic pharaoh to erect a pyramid. As we have shown in Chapter 1 this notion is mistaken. Nevertheless, he was certainly the first pharaoh to erect a pyramid or large monument of stone. The design of the Sakkara Pyramid's adjacent temple complex, in particular, provides ample proof of this. Columns are shaped in imitation of reed bundles and ceilings in imitation of palm logs. Doors are provided with imitation hinges, and it is evident that the builders were translating directly into stone architectural forms that had previously been executed exclusively in wood and reed.

Yet, as with almost all other areas of Egyptian history, the Step Pyramid and temples of Sakkara present numerous difficulties for conventional chronology. It has long been observed, for example, that the temple complex seems to display a number of very modern-looking features,¹¹² and to this day visitors are immediately struck by the so-called 'proto-Doric' columns of the temple hall.¹¹³ Furthermore, the mineralogist John Dayton has now demonstrated that the glazing work found in these monuments is unlikely to have predated by any great stretch of time the eighth or seventh century BC; he accordingly dated the entire complex to the eighth century.¹¹⁴ We need to remember too the enormous body of evidence, briefly alluded to at the close of the previous chapter, suggesting that Egypt's First Dynasty could not have commenced much before 1100 BC. If this is correct, it suggests a date of circa 950 to 900 BC for the commencement of the Third Dynasty.

112 F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt* Vol.3 (1901) pp.58-61.

113 Leonard Cottrell, *The Mountains of Pharaoh* (London, 1956) pp. 152-3.

114 Dayton, *Minerals, Metals, Glazing and Man* (1978).

As it transpires, this estimate concurs reasonably well with the evidence of the well-known Khnumibre genealogy. In the inscription, Khnumibre, an architect under one of the earlier Persian kings, listed his ancestors, father to son, stretching back twenty-five generations. The second earliest name on the list is given as Imhotep, with Djoser as the reigning king. It is clear then that the genealogy separates Khnumibre, who must be dated around 450 BC, from Imhotep by twenty-four generations. Allowing twenty to twenty-five years per generation, which, given the habitually early marriages and deaths of ancient peoples, is rather generous, we would be obliged to locate Djoser and Imhotep sometime between 1075 and 930 BC — not far removed from the date suggested by Dayton on the evidence of Third Dynasty technology and precisely in agreement with the chronology proposed by us.

Early scholarship was nonplussed by the evidence of Khnumibre's genealogy but because it clashed so decisively with the "established" chronology, it was soon dismissed as "symbolic" and "lacking historical substance".¹¹⁵

WHO WAS KING DJOSER?

Egyptians of later years came to regard Djoser's reign as something of a golden age, and the pharaoh himself was accredited with almost godlike powers. Above all, he was regarded as a paragon of wisdom (as evinced by the name Djoser). His cult grew and grew, and by the Saite period (Twenty-Sixth Dynasty) he was already deified. He was, in the words of one commentator, viewed:

both as a patron of literature and a physician of such eminence that he came to be identified with Asklepios, the Greek god of medicine.... In after years he was remembered with reverence as one of the greatest of the early Pharaohs ... on one of the votive tablets of the Apis worshippers of the Twenty-Second Dynasty, reverence is done to his name; we read of a priest of his spirit named Sonbf, and another, Ahmose, in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.¹¹⁶

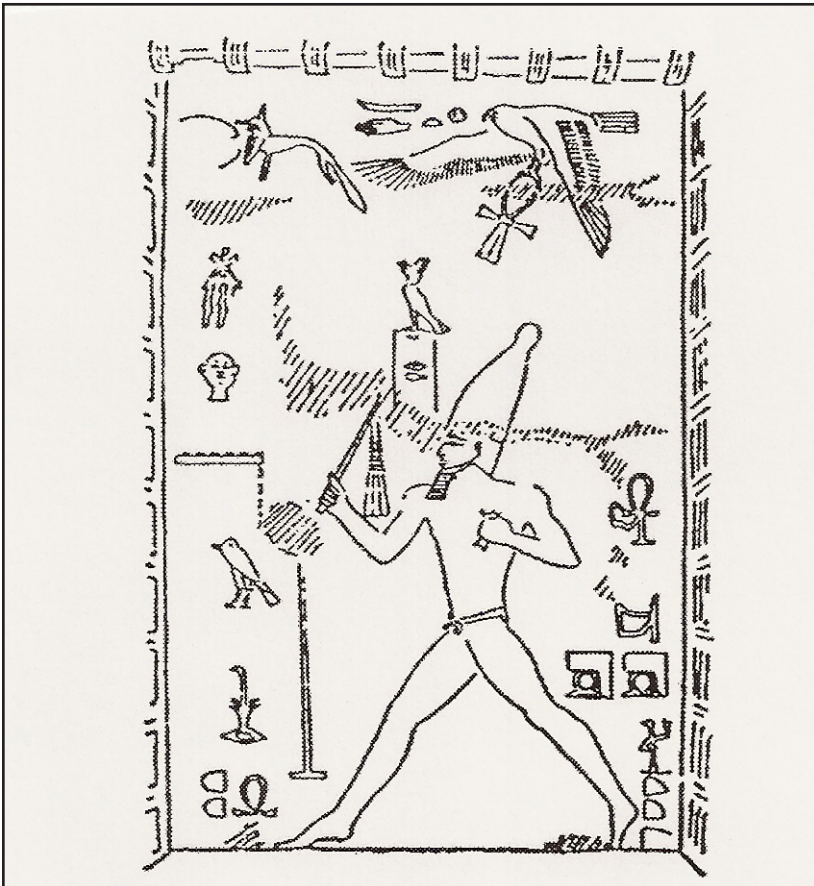
Djoser then had a priesthood dedicated to him and was invoked as a god centuries after his death. What could have prompted such adulation? The explanation normally given is that as the first pharaoh to leave great monuments of stone, later generations would naturally have been impressed by him. His monuments guaranteed his immortality. There is no doubt a certain amount of the truth in this explanation, but it does not cover everything. For

¹¹⁵ See Jesse E. Lasken, "Towards a New Chronology of Ancient Egypt," *Discussions in Egyptology*, 17 (1990).

¹¹⁶ Arthur Weigall, *A History of the Pharaohs* Vol.1 (London, 1952) p. 147.

Djoser's reputation was enhanced by that of his vizier, the godlike Imhotep. This man was, as we shall see, regarded as Egypt's greatest ever seer and interpreter of dreams. He is also normally accredited with designing the great structures at Sakkara. Acting together, these two exceptional figures were believed to have shaped the course of Egyptian civilization in a unique way, and, it was said, they saved the country from a well-remembered and potentially devastating famine.

FIGURE 13. STELA OF KING DJOSER PERFORMING THE RITUAL HEB SED RUN.
(from his mortuary temple at Sakkara)



Note: An inscription from Aswan tells how, during the reign of Djoser, Egypt was afflicted by a famine lasting seven years. In the midst of the famine, the King had a dream which contained the key to its alleviation. The dream was interpreted by his wise advisor Imhotep.

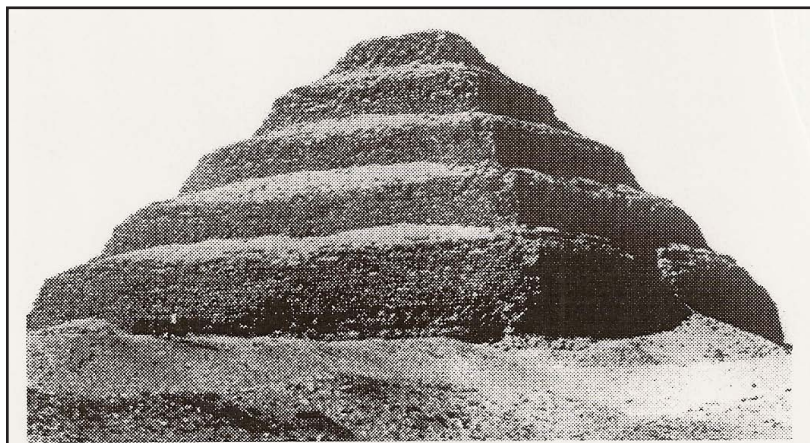
Thus the legend, of which more shall be said in due course. But of the man Djoser there is precious little that can be ascertained. He is usually regarded as first pharaoh of the Third Dynasty, but why this should be so is viewed as most mysterious. He “Is connected with Khasekhemwy, the last king of the Second Dynasty, through Queen Nymaathap who has generally been accepted as the wife of Khasekhemwy and the mother of Djoser,”¹¹⁷ which means, in effect, that Djoser was the son of Khasekhemwy. Why then is he considered the founder of a new line? The same author continues, “It must be admitted that here and in other cases later in the old Kingdom we do not understand clearly the facts governing a change of dynasty, although we follow the division into groups of kings which is indicated in the dynastic lists of the Ptolemaic writer Manetho.” Attempting to answer the puzzle, he notes that, “It now seems likely that Neterykhet Djoser was preceded by Sanakhte as the first king of the Third Dynasty,” and that “Sanakhte may have been an elder brother of Neterykhet [Djoser]...” But this hardly solves the problem. The undeniable fact appears to be that Djoser was a son of Khasekhemwy of Dynasty 2 and that he should not, therefore, be regarded as representing a new dynasty.

Yet from the perspective adopted in the present volume an answer is forthcoming. Djoser did not represent a new dynasty so much as a New Age. The clue comes in evidence already alluded to, suggestive of severe disturbances in the cosmic order right throughout the period of the Second Dynasty. We recall how Professor Mullen remarked on the strange obsession during the time of the battle between Seth and Horus, a battle which later Egyptian tradition insisted left the country a devastated wasteland. It is remarkable that the fourth king of the Second Dynasty ceased to identify himself with Horus (the “good” god) and championed the cause of Seth instead; he changed his name from Sekhemib to Peribsen. In Mullen’s words, “In the first of the three names in standard Old Kingdom titulary where a drawing of the hawk of Horus should appear he substituted the dog-like animal of Seth (a species now extinct). Seth also appears on a seal found in his tomb which reads ‘the god of Ombos [Seth’s cult center] to his son Perabsen...’” Mullen remarked too on how the final two kings of the period, Khasekhem and Khasekhemwy, named themselves “Appearance of the power” and “Appearance of the two

¹¹⁷ W. Stevenson Smith, “The Old Kingdom in Egypt and the Beginning of the First Intermediate Period,” in *CAH*, Vol. 1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 146.

powers,” and how these names as said to designate the re-establishment of order. Khasekhemwy also added a title meaning “the two gods in him are at peace.” Mullen called attention, too, to the fact that all the royal tombs of the period were badly damaged by fire.¹¹⁸

FIGURE 14. THE STEP-PYRAMID AT SAKKARA.



Note: Said to have been designed by Imhotep, this monument is not a series of mastabas placed haphazardly on top of each other but is itself (together with the surrounding temple-complex and encircling wall) part of a giant mastaba in stone.

That this strange nomenclature was indicative of unusual natural events is confirmed by two quite separate pieces of evidence. On the one hand, archeology has identified, as we saw, a dramatic change in climate, or rather series of changes in climate, right throughout the Early Dynastic period. This evidence has been dealt with in detail above and needs no further elaboration here. Essentially, the Early Dynastic Age saw the Sahara transformed from a well-watered savannah into a barren wasteland.¹¹⁹ Secondly, Manetho, accessing Egyptian records and traditions now lost, clearly describes major disturbances in the natural order at the time. Again, we need not go into the details, as they have already been examined. What needs to be stressed here is that right at the start of the Third Dynasty, Manetho speaks of a strange “waxing” of the sun which so frightened the Libyans, with whom the Egyptians were then at war, that they capitulated.¹²⁰ From the evidence cited in

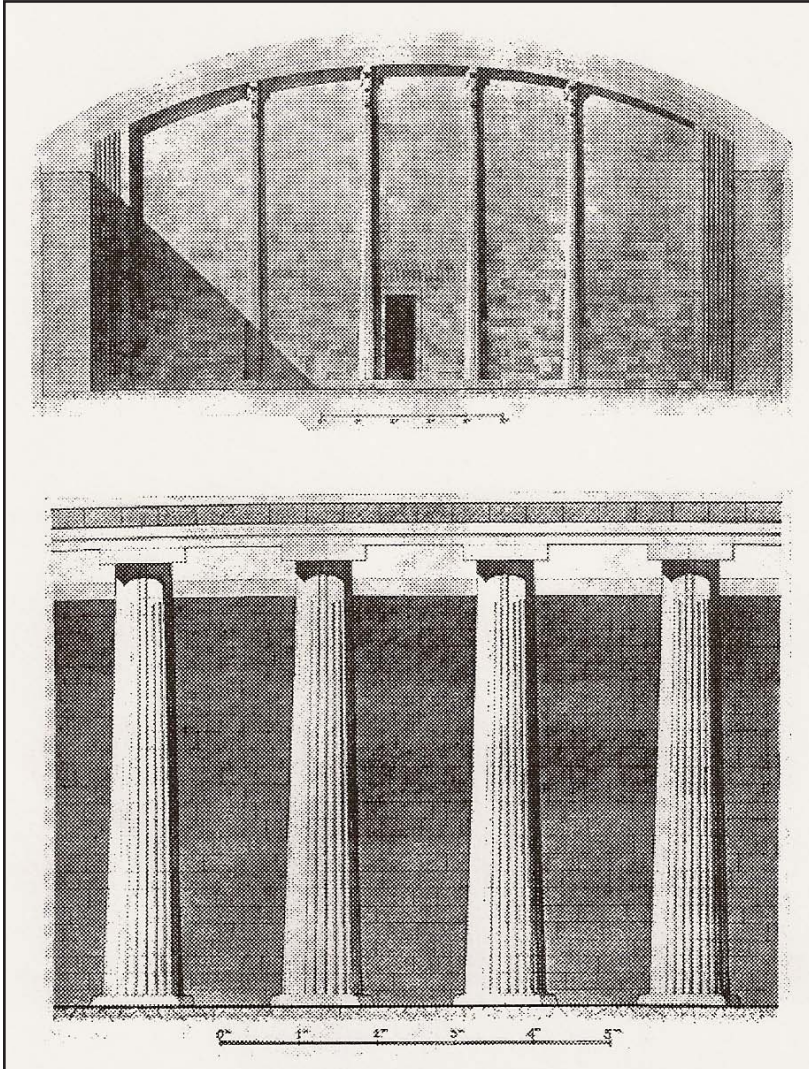
¹¹⁸ William Mullen, “Myth and the Science of Catastrophism: A Reading of the Pyramid Texts,” *Pensée*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1973).

¹¹⁹ K. W. Butzer. *op cit*.

¹²⁰ See eg. www.tertullian.org/rpearse/syncellus/index.htm.

the previous chapter, it would appear that this “waxing” of the sun cannot be separated from the cosmic events which afflicted the world during this epoch, the very events which rendered the Sahara a desert.

FIGURE 15. THE TEMPLE COMPLEX AT SAKKARA.



Note: Said to have been designed by Imhotep (after Petrie).

It would appear then that Djoser's reign was regarded as marking the inception of a new dynasty because of these events. The order of the cosmos had been disturbed yet again in the time of Khasekhemwy, Djoser's father, in the midst of which the young prince seized the reins of power and restored order. That such an event actually occurred is confirmed by the evidence of an inscription near the First Cataract, where he is said to have rescued Egypt from a devastating famine. In this enterprise he was assisted by one of the most extraordinary characters ever to appear in Egyptian history.

DJOSER AND THE SEVEN YEARS' FAMINE

Egyptian tradition recorded a great famine lasting seven years. This disaster was said to have occurred during the reign of Djoser, and from the story of this event we may come to understand exactly why pharaoh Netjerket was called *djoser*, "The Wise."

The only account of the seven years' famine to survive is on a rock-cut inscription near Aswan, which dates from a very late period — possibly from the reign of Ptolemy V (Epiphanes), who lived in the first century BC.¹²¹ The inscription records the famine as an historical fact, placing it in the eighteenth year of Djoser. Indeed the inscription purports to date from Djoser's time, though this is generally dismissed. Nevertheless, it may well be a copy (with of course updated language and grammar) of an extremely ancient record. We are told that during Djoser's reign Egypt found itself in a great crisis. The pharaoh bewails his lot:

I was in distress on the Great Throne, and those who are in the palace were in heart's affliction from a very great evil, since the Nile had not come in my time for a space of seven years. Grain was scant, fruits were dried up, and everything which they eat was short.¹²²

In his distress, the king asks Imhotep, described as the "Chief Lector Priest", for advice. He wishes to know the secrets of the river: "What is the birthplace of the Nile? Who is ... the god there? Who is the god?" At this, Imhotep departs and returns with a strange tale about the island of Elephantine in the upper Nile:

There is a city in the midst of the waters [from which] the Nile rises, named Elephantine. It is the Beginning of the Beginning, the Beginning Nome,

¹²¹ See H. K. Brugsch, *Die biblischen sieben Jahre der Hungersnoth* (Leipzig, 1891) and J. Vandier, *La Famine dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Cairo, 1936).

¹²² Ed. and trans. John A. Wilson in Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, 1950) p. 32.

[facing] toward Wawat. It is the joining of the land, the primeval hillock of earth, the throne of Re, when he reckons to cast life beside everybody.¹²³

Elephantine, says the wise priest, is the home of the ram-headed Khnum, and it is he who sends the life-giving waters of the Nile thence. He goes on to recite Khnum's divine powers, and mentions some of the other gods of the region. Pharaoh then performs a number of services to Khnum and the other divinities as an act of repentance. Next, we hear how Khnum appears to the king in a dream:

As I slept in life and satisfaction, I discovered the god standing over against me. I propitiated him with praise; I prayed to him in his presence. He revealed himself to me, his face being fresh. His words were:

"I am Khnum, thy fashioner ... I know the Nile. When he is introduced into the fields, his introduction gives life to every nostril, like the introduction [of life] into the fields ... the Nile will pour forth for thee, without a year of cessation or laxness for any land. Plants will grow, bowing under the fruit. Renenut will be at the head of everything Dependants will fulfil the purpose of their hearts, as well as the master. The starvation year will have gone, and [people's] borrowing from their granaries will have departed. Egypt will come into the fields, the banks will sparkle ... and contentment will be in their hearts more than that which was formerly."¹²⁴

On awakening, pharaoh ordered that a large tract of land stretching from Elephantine to Tacompsu should be dedicated to Khnum, and that a temple should be erected on the island in his honor. In addition, various other pious decrees were enacted in gratitude to the god.¹²⁵

Bearing in mind that Djoser was a ruler of the Early Dynastic Age, we must wonder whether this "famine" which could only be brought to an end by raising a temple to one of the celestial deities most probably refers to another of the cosmic disturbances which periodically afflicted the earth throughout this epoch. In fact, we shall argue that this is precisely what it was, and that, as an event, it corresponds precisely with the penultimate flood layer observed in the stratigraphies of Lower Mesopotamia.

Djoser's famine, of course, closely resembles the other from ancient tradition, that of Joseph the Hebrew. Virtually all the elements in the Egyptian account are there, though in a different order. In Joseph's tale the pharaoh's dream comes first, although both legends agree that the dream's interpretation provided the key to alleviating the famine. Again the Egyptian story has the wise seer Imhotep assist the king in dealing with the famine, and it is

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

obvious that Imhotep's role closely resembles that of Joseph in the Genesis story. In addition, the nature of the god Khnum is significant here. In early times, the ram-headed divinity had been one of the foremost in Egypt. He was regarded as the creator god and was portrayed, in biblical style, fashioning mankind upon the potter's wheel.¹²⁶ Khnum was indeed viewed very much as the Old Testament Spirit of God, a fact that induced some scholars to regard the whole cult of Khnum as influential in the development of Hebrew religious ideas.¹²⁷

Scholars were not slow to associate Djoser's famine of seven years with that of Joseph, and they would undoubtedly have made the connection between Imhotep and Joseph, Djoser and Joseph's pharaoh, had it not been for the chronological discrepancy. Djoser was supposed to have reigned around 2600 BC, whereas according to biblical chronology, Joseph would have lived around 1700 BC — yet again, that gap of 1000 years. Scholars had therefore to content themselves with vague "connections" between the two legends. Some argued that the story of Joseph had influenced the Egyptian tale, whilst others argued that the Genesis account was influenced by the Egyptian story. The best-known proponent of the latter argument was Brugsch.¹²⁸

Such ideas held good only if the conventional chronology was correct. However, we now see that such is not the case, and that Djoser, as well as Joseph, must both belong in the early part, probably the tenth century, of the first millennium. Could it be then that Djoser is indeed Joseph's pharaoh, and that Imhotep, the great seer who advised Djoser on the seven years' famine, is none other than Joseph himself? Before making a final pronouncement, let us briefly take a closer look at the life and character of Joseph as they are revealed in the Genesis account.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

The story of Joseph, one of the best-known and best-loved of the Old Testament, occupies almost a quarter of the Book of Genesis. That fact alone illustrates the importance of Joseph to Israel's early history. He it was who brought the Twelve Tribes to Egypt, where in time they would grow to nationhood. Yet the story outlined in Genesis reveals the importance of Joseph

126 J.G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians* Vol.3 (London, 1878) pp. 1-4.

127 *Ibid.*, p. 4 "Kneph, or more properly Chnoumis, was retained as the idea of the 'Spirit of God, which moved upon the face of the waters.'" The same writer notes that classical writers identified Khnum with Jupiter, the father of the gods.

128 H. K. Brugsch, *Steinschrift und Bibelwort* (1898) pp.88-97.

not only to the history of Israel but also to the history of Egypt and furthermore illustrates the thoroughly Egyptian background to the entire episode.

Joseph was portrayed as the classic underdog, the maltreated younger brother, who rose to power and eventually returned good for evil. As such, there seems little doubt that the story we now have — in the form that we have it — dates from a comparatively recent time. The idea of returning good for evil was essentially alien to the early peoples. No one who knows anything of how ancient man thought would dare to date the story of Joseph, as it now stands, before the eighth century BC.

Fully confirming this conclusion is the fact that the Egypt portrayed in the Joseph narrative is a highly civilized, imperial state. The pharaoh rides on a chariot and issues written decrees. The ceremony in which Joseph is made vizier/prime minister is an accurate portrayal of New Kingdom/Late Period ritual.¹²⁹ The Egyptian names given in the narrative, i.e., Potiphar (Pedephre) and Asenath (Nasneith), are names of the Late Period, popular in the mid-first millennium BC.¹³⁰

In harmony with all this, though puzzling in its own way, is the astonishing amount of Egyptian influence now recognized as present in the Joseph narrative. The terms and idioms used are Egyptian through and through. Indeed such is the resemblance to Egyptian phraseology and custom that that some scholars now regard these chapters of Genesis as based on an Egyptian record. One such commentator is the Israeli Egyptologist A. S. Yahuda, a man whose work we shall examine in greater detail at a later stage. Yahuda wondered at the superabundance of Egyptian terms, phrases, metaphors and loan-words present throughout Genesis, remarking on their comparative absence from later books of the Old Testament. Some examples provided by Yahuda are as follows:

Joseph's appointment as vizier was the 'kernel' of the story, according to Yahuda. For this office, a Hebrew word with a root which has the meaning "to do twice, to repeat, to double" is used. Yahuda explained that in the same way the Egyptian word *sn.nw* ("deputy") was formed from *sn*, the word for "two".¹³¹ In the same verse, pharaoh commands all to "bow the knee" before Joseph. The Hebrew word for "bow" is agreed by most authorities to have been taken from the Egyptian.

129 See J. Vergote, *Joseph en Egypte* (1959); also Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* p. 101.

130 Ibid.

131 A. S. Yahuda, *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian* (1933).

Joseph was titled “father to pharaoh”, and, as Yahuda says, the Hebrew expression corresponds with the Egyptian *itf*, “father”, a common priestly title, and one borne by viziers.¹³² At the start of his conversation with Joseph, pharaoh says: “I have had a dream ... I have heard that you understand a dream to interpret it” (Gen.41:15). For “understand” the Hebrew uses the verb “to hear”. This term has proved very difficult for commentators, but, according to Yahuda, it corresponds entirely with the Egyptian use of *sdm* meaning “to hear” or “to understand”.¹³³ Another problem for commentators has been the sentence of Gen. 41:40, where pharaoh says literally to Joseph: “According to your mouth shall my people kiss”. The verb “to kiss” here has always seemed completely out of place. However, when we compare it with the Egyptian, “kiss” proves to be “a correct and thoroughly exact reproduction of what the narrator really meant to convey. Here an expression is rendered in Hebrew from a metaphorical one used in polished speech among the Egyptians.”¹³⁴ In polished speech the Egyptians spoke of *sn*, “kissing” the food, rather than the ordinary, colloquial *wrm*, which meant “eating”.

In the Joseph story, pharaoh is addressed in the third person, e.g., Gen. 41:34, “Let Pharaoh do this”. According to Yahuda this corresponds precisely to the court etiquette of Egypt. A characteristic term recurring in several passages of Genesis is “in the face of Pharaoh”, or “from the face of Pharaoh”, meaning “before pharaoh”. This, says Yahuda, corresponds with Egyptian court custom, where one might not speak to his majesty “to his face”, but only “in the face of his majesty” (*m hr hm-f*).¹³⁵ Again, in the Joseph narrative, the word “lord”, in reference either to pharaoh or Joseph, is given in the plural. This corresponds exactly with Egyptian usage where pharaoh, as well as being referred to as *nb* (“lord”), is spoken of as *nb.wy*, in the plural.

These instances are only a small sample of the evidence mustered by Yahuda, but they illustrate very clearly the profoundly Egyptian background to the whole story. Indeed, as we have said, so strong is the evidence that some commentators have suggested an Egyptian original of the narrative which Hebrew scribes more or less copied. In short, when the Israelites

132 Ibid., p. 23

133 Ibid., p. 7

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid., p. 13

came to write down the story of Joseph, they borrowed heavily on what the Egyptians themselves had written about him. None of this should surprise us. Genesis tells us quite clearly that Joseph was a major personality. He became the king's vizier. He brought Asiatics into Egypt. He presided over a social/political revolution. According to Genesis (47:22), the land of Egypt changed hands during his lifetime: Pharaoh became absolute master of the kingdom. But on top of all that Joseph was — most extraordinarily — a seer, a prophet, a visionary. Such a man, we would imagine, could not have been forgotten by the Egyptians.

Having stated all this, we now find that Joseph, coming just a few generations after the time of the Abraham migration, would have lived in roughly the same era as “The Wise” King Djoser and the wise seer Imhotep. It thus begins to look more and more clear that Joseph and Imhotep, the two great sages, were identical persons and that Joseph's wise king was “The Wise” Djoser. But the evidence is not yet exhausted. If we examine the personalities of Joseph and Imhotep in detail, we shall find even more clues to their identity.

JOSEPH AND THE SEER IMHOTEP

Imhotep, the sage and prophet of King Djoser's time, was long remembered and honored by the Egyptians, who regarded him as the greatest seer who ever lived. He was ranked, along with King Menes and the god Thoth, as the founder of civilization. Indeed, Imhotep was like a second founder; with him, Egypt entered into an entirely new phase of her history. His reputation was immense and the powers accredited to him godlike. James Baikie provides a fairly typical assessment of the man:

Age by age the reputation of [Imhotep] the great architect and statesman grew. By the time of the rise of the Middle Kingdom his words were being quoted in songs as the ultimate expression of human wisdom; he became the typical wise man, philosopher, coiner of wise sayings, and physician; the scribe caste of Egypt looked upon him as its patron saint, and the scribe poured out a libation to Imhotep before beginning any piece of writing. A temple was reared in his honor near the Serapeum at Saqqara, not far from the site of his greatest achievement, the pyramid of King Zoser. Finally, the process of making a man into a god was accomplished by the acceptance of Memphite belief that he was indeed the Son of God, being the offspring of Ptah, the Creator-God of Memphis, by a mortal mother.... When the priests of Edfu, in the Ptolemaic period, thirty centuries after his death, were describing the origin of the great temple which is the most complete extant example of an Egyptian house of God, they believed they could give it no higher recommendation than to say that the building was a

reproduction of the plan which “descended to Imhotep from heaven to the north of Memphis” in the days of King Zoser. The Greeks, who cherished a kind of awed reverence for the mysterious sort of impracticable wisdom which they imagined they discerned in the teaching of ancient Egypt, took over Imhotep with the rest, calling him Imouthes, and identified him, as his master had been identified, with Asklepios, as the patron god of learning. Stranger destiny has been reserved for no man than for this faithful servant of a great king.¹³⁶

There is little that can be added to the above assessment. Imhotep, plainly and simply, was the greatest of all Egypt’s wise men. As we have said, the close correlations between Imhotep and the biblical Joseph have not gone unnoticed by scholars. In recent years, English historian Tom Chetwynd revived the whole debate by argued strongly for identifying the two men. Chetwynd held to the conventional view that Imhotep belonged in an “Old Kingdom” dated to the third millennium BC and did not attempt to resolve the chronological difficulties inherent in this. Nevertheless, he demonstrated that the parallels between the two were sufficiently compelling to overrule the chronological problems. In short, so powerful was the evidence that irrespective of what the chronology apparently said, the two men simply had to be one and the same.

Some of the points raised by Chetwynd have already been referred to. He takes a detailed look, for example, at the two accounts of the seven years’ famine.¹³⁷ Next, he points to the very similar roles allocated to pharaoh’s counselors in the biblical and Egyptian accounts of the famine. Quoting from Budge’s translation of the Egyptian story, he illustrates the parallels: “The nobles are destitute of counsel”, says the Egyptian scribe, and, “He [a counselor] would like to go to the temple of Thoth to enquire of that god, to go to the College of Magicians and search through the sacred books.”¹³⁸ In the parallel text from Genesis, Chetwynd finds, “[Pharaoh] sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men, and told them his dream, but there was none could interpret it to Pharaoh” (Gen. 41:8).

Regarding the pharaoh’s dream, Chetwynd remarks: “In both stories the Pharaoh dreams of a time of plenty, when the granaries are full, and in both, the dreams are fulfilled so that there is abundance throughout the land; but

136 James Baikie, *A History of Egypt* Vol.1 (London, 1929) p. 97.

137 Tom Chetwynd, “A Seven Year Famine in the Reign of King Djoser with other Parallels between Imhotep and Joseph,” *Catastrophism and Ancient History* IX:1 (January, 1987).

138 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

in the Egyptian account the abundance follows upon the famine, whereas in the Joseph story this is reversed.”¹³⁹

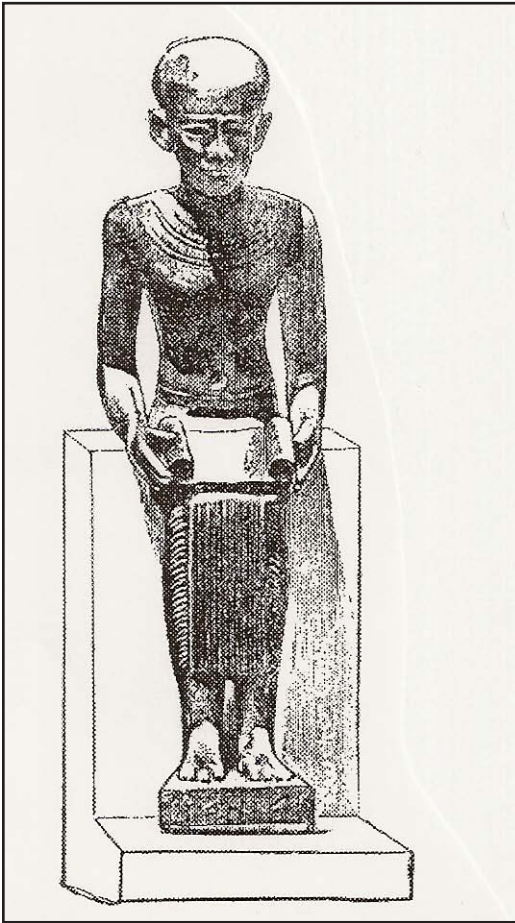


FIGURE 16. LATE
STATUE OF IMHOTEP.
(after A. Erman)

Next, Chetwynd points to the grants of land and the levy of tithes in both accounts. From the Egyptian story we hear that “The King endowed Khnum — and his priesthood — with 20 shoinoi, or measures, of land, on each bank of the river.” This is compared with the biblical “And Pharaoh said to Joseph: I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you shall eat the fat of the land” (Gen. 47:22). The whole question of social reforms under Joseph’s administration, including land ownership and tithes, is of course

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 51.

of the utmost importance and ties in with reforms and rituals traditionally associated with Imhotep.

Chetwynd also emphasizes parallels between the cult of Imhotep and the enduring reputation of Joseph, as well as the role of magic, dreams and oracles in the traditions surrounding both men. But perhaps his strongest point is the evidence he brings to light concerning the names Joseph and Imhotep. Imhotep, he notes, means “Im is content” or “Im is satisfied”. Chetwynd quotes Albert Clay, who affirms that Im “is a Syrian god, probably identifiable with Baal Adan or Baal Saphon”.¹⁴⁰ But, “Saphon or Zaphen also occurs again in the Egyptian name given to Joseph by the Pharaoh: ‘Zaphenath Paneah’.”¹⁴¹ Further emphasizing the link, he notes that “Later editors of the Bible took a dim view of personal names with Baal in them and sometimes substituted the shortened form of Yahweh: Je — Jehu — Jeho — Jo.”

Could “Joseph” have been derived from Baal Saphon, as “Jehu-saph(on)”?

Such a solution seems very plausible, and it is further strengthened by the fact that on their departure from Egypt, the Israelites encamped opposite Baal-Zaphen, on the shores of the Red Sea.

It thus appears that Joseph was named for the Syrian/Canaanite god Saphon but that Imhotep was named for precisely the same deity, Im/Saphon. In view of this, and in view of all the other evidence examined, there seems little doubt that Joseph and Imhotep must have been one and the same person. Centuries after his death, the Egyptians, it seems, continued to revere the great seer and healer who had saved the country from a seven-year famine and whom they named Imhotep in remembrance of his Syrian origin. Yet here there is a problem, for the Egyptians apparently regarded Imhotep as a native of their own land.

IMHOTEP THE MAN

According to the genealogy of Khnumibre, Imhotep was the son of a native Egyptian named Ka-Nefer, described as “the director of works”. Whilst it is probable that the earlier part of Khnumibre’s list is not to be taken as historical in the strict sense of the word, it is nevertheless true to say that the Egyptians of later times very definitely regarded Imhotep as a native Egyptian. The titles, or some of the titles, of the great seer have been found

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

inscribed on a statue base from the great court of Djoser's complex at Sak-kara. They read:

The chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt; the first after the King of Upper Egypt; administrator of the great palace, hereditary lord, the high priest of Heliopolis, Imhotep — the builder, the sculptor, the maker of stone vases.¹⁴²

Two points immediately strike us here. Imhotep is described as a “hereditary lord” and as the “high priest of Heliopolis”. Both titles strongly suggest that he was a native Egyptian and not some foreigner appointed to high office. The term “hereditary lord” is a translation of the Egyptian, *Iry-pat*, a group or class of people whom we may broadly define as the Egyptian nobility, a group which appeared to be linked by blood to the pharaoh. In the words of David Rohl, “These *iry-pat* were an elite nobility which surrounded the pharaoh — they were effectively the courtiers of the royal palace. They also had ancestral links back to the Followers of Horus. The ancient texts make a clear distinction between the *Patu* and the two other population groups in the Nile valley — the *Henemmet* and the *Rekhyt* ... The most famous *iry-pat* was none other than the great architect, magician and sage, Imhotep — the genius who built the magnificent Step Pyramid complex at Sakkara for his king, Djoser.”¹⁴³

On the face of it then it does appear that, in spite of everything else, Joseph and Imhotep cannot have been the same person. But is this really the case? We have come across the *Iry-pat* before and have identified them with the Asiatic culture-bearers who entered Egypt just prior to the founding of the First Dynasty. We have suggested therefore that they were blood-relations of the people we now call the Jews. Inter-marriage between Egyptians and Asiatic newcomers is suggested in the story of Abraham's Egyptian wife Hagar and in the brief marriage of the pharaoh to Sarai. We saw too that in all probability one of the reasons why the Egyptians named Canaan the “Divine Land” was because they were aware that many of the tribe from which their ruling class, the *Iry-pat*, were descended, originated in that part of the world. Egyptian texts make it very clear that Punt (also called the “Divine Land”) was the ancestral home of their nobility, whilst other evidence (such as the custom of circumcision and tracing descent through the female line), strongly suggest an extremely close link between the Hebrews and the

¹⁴² Rohl, *Legend: The Genesis of Civilisation* (1998) p. 360

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

Egyptian ruling class. Could it be then that Imhotep's identification with the Iry-pat alludes to his Puntite/Canaanite blood?

The evidence, I hold, suggests that this is exactly what it refers to.

Imhotep's other title/position, that of high priest of Heliopolis (On), also presents no real problem. Indeed, here there is a direct affirmation of biblical tradition about Joseph, for we are told that pharaoh married him to Asenath, daughter of the High Priest of Heliopolis, who is named Potiphar (Gen. 41:45). In Egypt, heredity passed through the female line. This included even the kingship; incumbent pharaohs were required to marry their sisters, the crown princesses, before they mounted the throne. Whoever married the crown princess, whether of royal blood or not, was elevated to the kingship. The office of High Priest was transmitted in the same way. Marriage to Asenath effectively made Joseph the next High Priest of Heliopolis.

So here again, rather than presenting an insurmountable problem for our Joseph-Imhotep equation, the hieroglyphic records of Egypt actually provide stunning confirmation.

In later centuries, the Egyptians may have been unwilling to accept or recognize that their greatest genius and wise man was a foreigner, a man to whom they nevertheless accorded unbounded devotion. Yet their neighbors, the Jews, may have been well aware of Imhotep's true identity and origins. Certainly it seems that they borrowed heavily from Egyptian tradition about Imhotep when committing the story of Joseph to writing. What we should not forget, however, is that initially the Egyptians themselves had few written documents to go by; they too remembered the great sage largely through the hazy lens of oral transmission. Almost certainly they began to write down their legends at more or less the same time as the Hebrews — sometime in the eighth century BC.

What then are we to make of Imhotep/Joseph and his story? Was he really an interpreter of dreams who saved Egypt from a famine?

The great seer's role in the events of the time can only be understood if we know what those events were. The present writer subscribes to Velikovsky's view that the earth had been periodically threatened during the Bronze Age by a great comet and that the inhabitants of the planet were witness to a series of cosmic "battles" amongst the gods. The contendings of Horus and Set can only be understood in this context. In the Egyptian religion Set was

clearly identified with Apopi, the Cosmic Serpent, which threatened to rain death and destruction on the world. Horus' victory over Set was therefore the victory over the Cosmic Serpent, the great comet. Velikovsky identified myths from all over the world which spoke of a hero-figure who had decapitated the serpent. This was the archetypal dragon-slayer, known in Greek myth variously as Heracles or Perseus, but found in every culture. The comet, according to Velikovsky, had lost its tail, been "decapitated" and thus removed as a threat to the world.

It seems highly likely that the natural event which was interpreted as the decapitation of the serpent occurred right at the end of Dynasty 2. There is no question that it was just then that human sacrifice — necessary to propitiate the unpredictable dragon — was finally abandoned. This is confirmed both in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Imhotep/Joseph, as a savior of men, must have been involved in these events, or rather in the interpretation of them. Perhaps he was, really, a gifted youth who could interpret dreams. Such a person would certainly be sought out in times of uncertainty and danger. It could well be that Khasekhemwy, Djoser's father, was killed in the natural catastrophes of the time. This event would have needed to be interpreted, as would the events occurring in the sky. Netjerkhet/Djoser, as a young ruler, would not have been averse to taking the advice of a seer, even one from a foreign land. Imhotep/Joseph's counsel was to raise a temple to Khnum in Upper Egypt. This certainly speaks of a new cult, or new cult-practice. The old necessity for human hecatombs was gone, as the dragon no longer threatened the earth. But sacrifices, of animals (possibly cows?) to the Nile god, would perchance ensure a steady and regular supply of life-giving water for the future.

The epoch of Imhotep/Joseph thus saw the end of the worst period of cosmic instability, but it did not bring about the definitive end to the age of catastrophes. In Velikovsky's scenario, the encounter between the Great Comet and its nemesis, the hero-deity, merely produced another scourge for the earth. This was the god variously known as Heracles, Perseus, or Mars. This latter deity would bring, towards the first quarter of the first millennium BC, a final period of cosmic instability.

Before moving on, there is one point that needs to be addressed. More than one authority has interpreted the famine inscription at Elephantine as

a forgery perpetrated either by the priests of Khnum at Elephantine or, more unusually, by Jewish or pro-Jewish propagandists of the Ptolemaic age, intended to give credence to the biblical tradition of Joseph.¹⁴⁴

There is no question that a Jewish military colony existed at Elephantine in Persian times, though it seems to have disappeared before the end of the Persian epoch. The inscription, on the other hand, is fairly reliably dated to the Ptolemaic era. But apart from the fact (noted above) that Imhotep's era really was a time of major climate disturbance, the idea of it being a Jewish-inspired propaganda piece seems highly unlikely for several other reasons.

First and foremost, monotheistic Jews of the Ptolemaic epoch would hardly have been likely to identify Joseph with an Egyptian seer and soothsayer (popular Egyptian tradition even described Imhotep as a "magician") who interpreted dreams sent by the ram-headed god Khnum. For Jews, such an identification would have been blasphemous.

Secondly, and following on from the first point, the details of the Egyptian story are very different to those of the biblical. In the Egyptian account the famine occurs first, and only then does the king have his dream. Furthermore, in this version there is no mention of fat or lean cows. Imhotep's interpretation of the dream involves the building of a shrine to Khnum, not the building of store-houses. If the inscription had been written by Jewish exiles, these details must cause us to wonder. The inscription, after all, purports to come from the time of Djoser and therefore to be a contemporary account, which would imply, in effect, that the Egyptian version of the story is true and the biblical one a fiction. If Jewish exiles had concocted the story, it would surely have conformed more closely to the Genesis narrative.

Finally, the Jews of the Ptolemaic Age had a very definite chronology which linked their own history with that of Egypt, and in that chronology Imhotep lived many centuries before Joseph. If they were going to create a forgery, they would have picked an Egyptian vizier probably of the Hyksos Age or just slightly earlier, one who lived in an age closer to what they imagined was Joseph's epoch.

¹⁴⁴ See, e.g., www.touregypt.net. "The inscription ... is a Ptolemaic forgery cut by the priests of the god Khnum of Elephantine."

CHAPTER 4. EXODUS

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt has already been thoroughly covered by Velikovsky, and the exhaustive investigation found in *Ages in Chaos* (1952) deserves much more credit than it has hitherto received. Velikovsky showed in great detail how the Book of Exodus portrayed a land and a whole world in the grip of some tremendous upheaval of nature. This upheaval manifests itself firstly in the Ten Plagues, and then, as the children of Israel flee Egypt, the forces of nature, in the form of great tidal waves or some such phenomenon, are released with terrifying violence against the pharaoh and his army: “The biblical story does not present the departure from Egypt as an everyday occurrence, but rather as an event accompanied by great upheavals of nature.

Grave and ominous signs preceded the Exodus: clouds of dust and smoke darkened the sky and colored the water they fell upon with a bloody hue. The dust tore wounds in the skin of man and beast; in the torrid glow vermin and reptiles bred and filled the earth; wild beasts, plagued by sand and ashes, came from the ravines of the wasteland to the abodes of men. A terrible torrent of hailstones fell, and a wild fire ran upon the ground; a gust of wind brought swarms of locusts, which obscured the light; blasts of cinders blew in wave after wave, day and night, night and day, and the gloom grew to a prolonged night, and blackness extinguished every ray of light. Then came the tenth and most mysterious plague: the Angel of the Lord “passed over the houses of the children of Israel ... when he smote the Egyptian, and delivered our houses” (Exodus 12:27). The slaves, spared

by the angel of destruction, were implored amid groaning and weeping to leave the land that same night. In the ash-grey dawn the multitude moved, leaving behind the scorched fields and ruins where a few hours before there had been urban and rural habitations.¹⁴⁵

Thus Velikovsky sets the scene for the greatest event of Israel's history. More than any other single episode, the Exodus shaped the character of the Hebrew nation. So sacred is the memory that each year at the Passover, the greatest festival of Judaism, the eldest son of every Jewish family is enjoined by tradition to ask his father to recite from the Haggadah some of the wonderful events that occurred when their ancestors were delivered from the Angel of Death, and from Egypt.

The Exodus, in short, was *the* event of Hebrew history. A natural catastrophe of almost unparalleled dimensions had apparently dissolved royal authority, allowing the Israelites to escape their bondage. But modern scholarship here stands in total disagreement with tradition. According to conventional ideas, the Exodus was not a notable event; there were no extraordinary happenings; the country was not beset by plagues; there was no unnatural darkness; pharaoh and his army were not drowned in the Red Sea. Indeed, historians now hold that the Egyptians were so unimpressed by the Exodus that they didn't even bother to mention it. If the Exodus occurred at all, conventional scholarship believes, it was merely the departure from Egypt of a minor band of Semitic shepherds.

Common sense alone would suggest that there is something seriously amiss here. Could an event that made such a profound impression on a people be totally fabulous? What could possibly have been the motive for inventing such a story, and how could such a lie be promoted as truth? As Velikovsky himself stressed, ancient peoples commonly regarded their ancestors as heroes and demigods. Why invent a story making your ancestors into helpless slaves? And even mainstream scholars have to admit that this presents a problem. Thus in the pages of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, O. Eissfeldt remarks that "It is quite inconceivable that a people could have obstinately preserved traditions about a dishonorable bondage of their ancestors in a foreign land, and passed them on from generation to generation, unless it had actually passed through such an experience."¹⁴⁶ And yet, having ad-

¹⁴⁵ Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* (1952) pp. 12-3.

¹⁴⁶ O. Eissfeldt, "Palestine in the Time of the Nineteenth Dynasty: (a) The Exodus and Wanderings," in *CAH*, Vol. 2 part 2 (3rd ed) p. 321.

mitted that, the same writer remarks, “There is no evidence outside the Old Testament for the sojourn of Israel in Egypt or for the exodus.”

We have already identified the reason for scholarship’s abject failure to solve the Exodus enigma: Searching in the records and events of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, they were unlikely to find evidence of an event that actually occurred many generations earlier. The Exodus, we shall find, did happen, and it happened much as it is recorded in the Torah. The Egyptians also recorded it, though the records they left of the event have been misdated and misinterpreted.

At some stage early in Egypt’s history, a great natural disaster plunged the country into chaos. This occurred when the Kingdom of the Nile was already, and had been for some time, a highly civilized and fully literate society. But during this event royal authority disappeared, slaves rose in rebellion, Asiatics invaded from the east, and famine stalked the land. A whole series, or rather *genre*, of documents dealing with these occurrences — now known as the Pessimistic Literature — clearly tell how the primary cause of these calamities was a great natural disaster, a disaster that blotted out the light of the sun and disrupted the flow of the Nile.

Virtually all of the Pessimistic treatises are dated to the First Intermediate Period, an epoch of anarchy that supposedly followed the collapse of the Old Kingdom towards the end of the Sixth Dynasty. According to one Egyptologist, most of these texts “can be dated within a period of no more than 50 years.”¹⁴⁷

It is evident, even to the most conservative Egyptologists, that the Pessimistic writers are not pessimists in the sense that they are inventing misfortunes or exaggerating the unpleasant side of life. Quite clearly they are describing disturbing events that have shaken the entire kingdom. Royal authority has collapsed. The dead are everywhere. Banditry and rapine are rife. Even worse, the forces of nature, it seems, have been unleashed in a most violent manner. One text from this era, popularly known as “A Man Dispute with his Soul over Suicide”, provides important clues. This document speaks of a flood-storm gathering in the north and the sun disappearing. The narrator’s wife and children are lost in the Lake of the Crocodile, a lake which commentators have surmised corresponds with the cosmic waters that sur-

147 Barbara Bell, “The Dark Ages in Ancient History: The First Dark Age in Egypt,” *American Journal of Archeology* 75, (1971) 24.

round the Primeval Island or Hill, the Nun.¹⁴⁸ Later in the story we hear of the children being “crushed in the egg”, apparently because they had “looked into the face of the Double Crocodile before they had lived.” The Double Crocodile appears to be Henti, a cosmic monster who symbolizes the final destruction at the end of a World Cycle.¹⁴⁹

What exactly is the significance of this cosmic crocodile, or serpent, should be apparent from what we have said in Chapter 1.

Perhaps the most important of the Pessimistic writers are Neferty, apparently a contemporary of the Fourth Dynasty pharaoh Sneferu, and Ipuwer, whose long and fragmentary Lamentations, have been the subject of much scholarly conjecture over the years. Without question, and this is a fact conceded by even the most skeptical of commentators, the Ipuwer Papyrus recounts events almost identical to those described in the Book of Exodus. Throughout the text, the scribe bewails the fate of his country, reduced as it is by some natural calamity to complete anarchy and lawlessness. Velikovsky recognized in the Papyrus Ipuwer in particular one of the missing Egyptian accounts of the Exodus, and he illustrated the biblical parallels by the simple method of juxtaposition. Here we shall follow his lead, and provide a small example of the two texts:

1. Plague is throughout the land. Blood is everywhere (The Papyrus 2:6).
... and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt (Exodus 2:6).

2. Why, really, all animals, their hearts weep. Cattle moan because of the state of the land (The Papyrus 5:5).

... behold the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain (Exodus 9:3).

3. Why really, gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire (The Papyrus 2:10).

... and the Lord sent thunder and hail and fire ran along the upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous ... (Exodus 9:23-24).

148 Stannard, *The Origins of Israel and Mankind* (1983) p. 761

149 Ibid.

4. Why really, trees are destroyed (The Papyrus 4:14).

Why really, that has perished which yesterday was seen, and the land is left over to its weakness like the cutting of flax (The Papyrus 5:12-13).

... and the hail smote every herb in the field, and brake every tree in the field (Exodus 9:25).

5. No fruit nor herbs are found for the birds (The Papyrus 6:1).

Why really, grain has perished on every side.... Everybody says: There is nothing! The storehouse is stripped bare (The Papyrus 6:3).

And the locusts went up over the land of Egypt ... very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt (Exodus 10:14-15).

6. ... fear ... Poor men ... the land is not light because of it (The Papyrus, fragments 9:11).

And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days (Exodus 10:22).

7. Why really, the children of princes are dashed against the walls. The [once] prayed-for children are [now] laid out on the high ground (The Papyrus 4:3).

And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all of the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon (Exodus 12:29).

8. It is groaning that is throughout the land, mingled with lamentations (The Papyrus 3:14).

... and there was a very great cry in Egypt. (Exodus 12:30).

9. He who places his brother in the land is everywhere (The Papyrus 2:13).

For there was not a house where there was not one dead (Exodus 12:30).

10. Behold now, the fire has mounted up on high. Its flame goes forth against the enemies of the land (The Papyrus 7:1).

And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go ... the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them that way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light (Exodus 13:17).

Even a skeptic would admit that, to all intents and purposes, the Papyrus Ipuwer appears to contain a graphic, blow by blow account of the disastrous Ten Plagues that struck Egypt at the time of the Exodus. It is untrue that the Egyptians did not remember it. The disaster, if Ipuwer and the others are to be believed, was as great a watershed in the history of Egypt as it was in the history of Israel. Yet the Exodus is not connected with these Pessimistic Texts because once again chronology gets in the way. The Pessimistic treatises, it is said, notwithstanding their similarities to the contents of the Book of Exodus, could not possibly be referring to the same events, because the Pessimistic literature was composed almost a thousand years before the accepted date of the Exodus. We have encountered that span of time before, that thousand years. So, one more time, scholars have had to content themselves with surmising the “influence” of the Pessimistic writers on the authors of Exodus.

Before moving on, we should note that some of the Pessimistic writers, though generally believed to be contemporary with Ipuwer and Neferty, seem actually to belong to a slightly later period. Among these must be placed the works of various dignitaries associated with the Tenth and Eleventh Dynasty kings Achthoes III and Inyotef II. It is easy to see why scholars would place these along with the better known Pessimistic authors. Consider for example the famous inscription of inscription of Ankhthifi:

I fed/kept alive [the towns of] Hefat, Hormer and ... at a time when the sky was [in] clouds/storm and the land was on the wind [and when everyone was dying] of hunger on this sandbank of Hell ... All of Upper Egypt was dying of hunger to such a degree that everyone had come to eating his children.¹⁵⁰

We have here, apparently, all the elements which concerned Ipuwer and Neferty. In the midst of some great natural catastrophe, it seems, cannibalism had broken out. A primeval chaos enveloped the land. In a number of accounts Inyotef III himself speaks of what he describes as the “Day of Shedy-

150 Barbara Bell, loc. cit.

etshya” or “Day of Misery” that brought devastation to the whole land.¹⁵¹ A text from the same period written by a dignitary named Kay records how he “made a gateway for all who came frightened on the day of tumult.”¹⁵² But alongside natural calamities, these documents also mention warfare. The chaos here lamented is partly the result of human activity. Such being the case, it is possible that some of these “Pessimistic” writers describe events during the Hyksos epoch, when the Herakleopolitan Achthoes rulers, allies and clients of the Hyksos, battled against the Inyotef rulers of Thebes, who styled themselves as patriotic freedom fighters. Though clearly in the style of Ipuwer and Neferty, it is possible therefore that some of these documents may have originated from a somewhat later period. Nevertheless, this is by no means certain. It could well be that they do indeed belong squarely alongside Neferty and Ipuwer. Certainly, as we shall now see, there is evidence to suggest that the pharaoh drowned in the Sea of Passage was actually called Akhthoes.

THE DROWNING OF PHARAOH AND HIS ARMY

In Exodus we read how pharaoh repented of letting the Hebrews go, then set out in pursuit of them with his soldiers, intent on cutting them to pieces. However, as he neared his prey, a most incredible phenomenon occurred. The sea, which the slaves had to cross, opened, forming “walls of water”. When the Egyptians attempted to follow, the water returned to its normal state, drowning the pharaoh and his men.

Such an event, so extraordinary in all its elements, must have made a deep impression on the people of the time. If it occurred at all (which of course conventional academia denies), it would surely not have been forgotten by the Egyptians. As a matter of fact, the story now told in most textbooks is that the Egyptians remembered no such thing and that the supposed cataclysm of the Red Sea is a fiction partly resulting from a mistranslation of the Hebrew *Yam Suf*, which, it is held, should properly be read as Sea of Reeds. During the dry season, it is surmised, one of the Bitter Lakes that now lie along the course of the Suez Canal probably evaporated sufficiently for the Hebrews to cross over it. Yet had the Israelites fled over the dried bed of a shallow lake, we must wonder how tradition could possibly have translated

¹⁵¹ W.C. Hayes, “The Middle Kingdom in Egypt: Internal History from the Rise of the Heracleopolitans to the Death of Ammenemes III,” in *CAH* Vol.1 part 2 (3rd ed.) p. 471.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

this into a miracle of awe-inspiring dimensions, a work of the Deity so extraordinary that it became one of the foundation stones of an entire religion.

But there is another, more probable, translation of *Yam Suf* — “Sea of the Hurricane”, from Hebrew *suf, sufa*, a great storm. This interpretation however is rarely mentioned in textbooks. Nevertheless, it far more readily agrees with the account recorded in the Book of Exodus and agrees furthermore with the Egyptian name for the Red Sea, *Shari*, implying Sea of Thundering, or Hammering.

The very term Red Sea itself is also probably of significance, for it reminds us of various ancient traditions which spoke of the world turning red and rivers running red, as with blood. The Book of Exodus, of course, records the same story.

From the point of view of the interpretation offered in the present study, it will be obvious that we view the momentous events at the Sea of Passage as a direct consequence of the cosmic disturbances of the period. Whether the Red Sea, or part of it, actually parted, or whether, in response to a massive submarine earthquake, the sea temporarily retreated only to return in a great wall of water, is a question that will have to be posed at a later stage. Suffice for the moment to state that historians and archeologists have sought a “Sea of Reeds” explanation because they have misunderstood the whole nature of the catastrophic events described throughout Genesis and Exodus. We of course would place the disaster at the Sea of Passage contemporary with the Pessimistic Texts, so we must wonder whether any hint of catastrophe involving the drowning of a pharaoh is mentioned in this literature.

In fact, at least one or two of the Pessimistic writers specifically tell us that the pharaoh has been killed in the disaster they deplore, and in all of them this is implied. Ipuwer, we have seen, refers to the “children of princes dashed against the walls” whilst in his Prophecy, Neferty goes much further when he says, “Behold, the great one [pharaoh] is fallen in the land whence thou art sprung... Behold, princes [nomarchs] hold sway in the land, things are made as though they had never been made.”¹⁵³ Various non-hieroglyphic sources also refer to the death of a king (usually in water) at some early stage in Egypt’s history. Thus Manetho mentioned a pharaoh Akthoes, “who was more dreadful than all who went before him, who did evil throughout Egypt,

153 A.H. Gardiner, “New Literary Works from Egypt,” *Journal of Egyptian Archeology* 1, (1914) 100-16.

and being seized with madness was destroyed by a crocodile.”¹⁵⁴ We have already encountered the crocodile god, the primeval monster Henti or Sebek, who symbolized the general dissolution of all things at the end of a world age. It is therefore apparent that the story of Akhthoes’ destruction by the crocodile belongs to the same epoch as the Pessimistic Literature, and this is seemingly confirmed by the fact that Manetho’s Akhthoes is generally identified with the Akhety kings who formed the Herakleopolitan Tenth Dynasty. These rulers of course reigned right through the Intermediate Period from which the Pessimistic Texts are dated. More will be said of them as we proceed.

Another tradition recorded in classical literature told of an Egyptian king named Typhon who, engaging in some cosmic battle with the elements, was buried beneath the waters of Lake Serbonis on the northern shores of the Sinai Peninsula.¹⁵⁵

Reflecting these late accounts is an obscure inscription on an old shrine from el Arish in the eastern Sinai Peninsula. The shrine, apparently of Ptolemaic date, was being used as a water trough by shepherds before being rescued archeologists. Two separate translations of the text were made, and the subject has been the center of fairly extensive debate. The inscription seems to record some form of cosmic battle, reminiscent of scenes from the Pyramid Texts, where the god Atum, who is nevertheless described in terms identical to those used for the pharaoh, follows his enemies, or the enemies of Egypt, into a whirlpool. In *Ages in Chaos*, Velikovsky identified this episode as an Egyptian account of the drowning of pharaoh at the Sea of Passage and followed the French translator Georges Goyon in naming the drowned pharaoh as Tom or Thoum. He took things a stage further when he proposed linking “pharaoh” Thoum to the king Tutimaheus who, according to Manetho, reigned during the Hyksos Conquest.

Yet the el Arish shrine does not name the pharaoh who entered the “place of the Whirlpool”. He is simply identified as the sun-god Ra-Atum (the name can be written variously as Atum, Tum, Tumi etc). This is quite normal in Egyptian literature. That “Atum” here very definitely refers to a pharaoh is indicated by the fact that the name is enclosed within a royal cartouche.

154 F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt* Vol.1 (1894) p. 112.

155 Herodotus, iii, 5.

Notwithstanding his mistake of trying to interpret “Atum” as a pharaoh “Tom” or “Thom”, Velikovsky was clearly onto something of great importance. In spite of the fact that the inscription is badly mutilated and the order of events by no means clear, it is evident that some form of catastrophe is being described. We are told how,

The land was in great affliction. Evil fell on this earth ... It was a great upheaval in the residence ... Nobody left the palace during nine days, and during these nine days of upheaval there was such a tempest that neither the men nor the gods could see the faces of their next.¹⁵⁶

Impenetrable darkness was of course one of the most terrifying of the Ten Plagues visited upon Egypt. Velikovsky explained it as the result of a combination of volcanic ash and cinders combined with hurricane force winds which disturbed the desert sands. Next we are told how, in the midst of this, Asiatics moved against Egypt. The pharaoh, it is said, went forth to meet them, “... his majesty of Shou went forth to battle against the companions of Apopi.”¹⁵⁷ Thus the Egyptians portrayed the king’s motives in marching eastwards as entirely noble. The outcome however was a disaster:

Now when the majesty of Ra-Harmachis (Harakhti?) fought with the evil-doers in this pool, the Place of the Whirlpool, the evil-doers prevailed not over his majesty. His majesty leapt into the so-called Place of the Whirlpool.¹⁵⁸

The pharaoh did not survive his encounter with the whirlpool. He was raised high in the air, according to the shrine, he ascended to the gods. In other words, he died. In Velikovsky’s opinion, when all elements of the el Arish text are viewed as a whole, it seems highly probable that they are referring to the same events as those recounted in Exodus. “The story of the darkness in Egypt as told in Hebrew and Egyptian sources is very similar. The death of the Pharaoh in the whirling waters is also similar in both Hebrew and Egyptian sources, and the value of this similarity is enhanced by the fact that in both versions the Pharaoh perished in a whirlpool during or after the days of the great darkness and violent hurricane.”¹⁵⁹

But there was one other point of agreement between the el Arish shrine and the Book of Exodus. The march of the pharaoh into battle against the

156 F.L. Griffith, *The Antiquities of Tell el Yahudiyeh and Miscellaneous Work in Lower Egypt during the Years 1887-1888* (London, 1890).

157 Ibid., p. 73.

158 Ibid.

159 I. Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* (1952) p. 43.

whirlpool is connected with a place named Pi-Kharoti. This, Velikovsky noted, was very like Pi-ha-hiroth in Exodus, the spot where pharaoh overtook the Israelites. Pi-ha-hiroth can also be written Pi-ha-Khiroth, or even Pi-Khiroth, since “ha” is merely the Hebrew definite article. In Velikovsky’s words, “Pi-Kharoti is Pi-Khiroth of the Hebrew texts. It is the same place. It is the same pursuit.”¹⁶⁰

After the destruction of the god-king in the whirlpool, his son, who is here named Geb, the god of the earth, sets out in search of him. The eyewitnesses from the locality “give him information about all that happened to Ra in Yat Nebes, the combats of the king Thoum [Atum].” The prince, it is said, then flees before the Asiatic invaders before making an unsuccessful attempt to communicate with them.

Thus the Egyptians did recall the drowning of pharaoh during the Exodus. It is incorrect to say that only the Jews knew of it. It was indeed an epic event in Egyptian history. The Pessimistic Literature, combined with snippets of information contained in classical and Hellenistic sources, as well as the obscure shrine of el Arish, combine to tell us that at a particular point in Egyptian history the land was struck by a terrible calamity of nature. In the midst of this disaster slaves rose in rebellion, and in the ensuing events the pharaoh was killed and royal authority dissolved. Yet in spite of all this, we still do not know the name of the pharaoh involved. Manetho’s statement might lead us to believe him to be one of the Akhety kings of the Herakleopolitan Dynasty. Certainly, if the Pessimistic Texts do relate to the Exodus, then the king we know as Akhety III (or II) would have been alive at the time. Yet other evidence, to be explored presently, will suggest that whilst a monarch named Akhety/Achthoes could have been present at the Sea of Passage, and could have been drowned there, he was not the pharaoh who had earlier subjected the Israelites to enslavement and oppression.

THE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

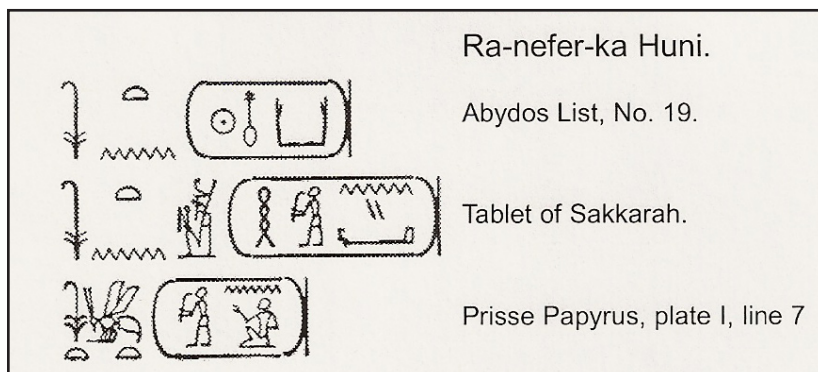
The Pessimistic Texts are dated by virtually all scholars to a relatively short period of political and economic instability at the end of the Old Kingdom (after Dynasty 6) known as the First Intermediate Period. This epoch is placed after the reigns of the well-known and powerful pyramid-building kings of Dynasties 4, 5 and 6 for the simple reason that the Pessimistic Texts,

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

as well as other evidence, suggests chaotic conditions in the Nile Valley. The Pessimistic Literature, it is held, must post-date the stable pyramid-building epoch.

FIGURE 17. THE NAMES AND TITLES OF PHAROAH HUNI / KHENEPHRES.

(after Budge)



Yet one of the most important of the Pessimistic Texts, the well-known Prophecy of Neferty, is attributed to the time of king Sneferu, the first pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty, who reigned at the demise of the era we call the Early Dynastic Age. For various reasons, but most especially because Sneferu's time is supposed to have been one of great stability and prosperity, most authorities deny the word of the document and decree that Neferty its author could not possibly have lived when he says he does.

The present writer however holds that not only Neferty, but Ipuwer and all the other major Pessimistic authors, lived and wrote during the reign of Sneferu and they were witnesses to the events which ended the life of Sneferu's immediate predecessor on the Double Throne, Huni. For the Pessimistic Texts record the cataclysmic events that brought to an end the Early Dynastic Age. Thus it was Huni, also known as Ra-nefer-ka, or Ka-nefer-ra (Khenephres), last king of the Third Dynasty, who must be identified with the tyrannical king of the Oppression, the pharaoh who ordered the death of the Hebrew children.

This identification is strikingly confirmed by a tradition emanating from Artapanus of Alexandria (third century BC.) and recorded in Eusebius' *Evangelicae Preparationis*. We are told that in an early age a pharaoh named Palmanothes began persecuting the Israelites. His daughter Merris however

adopted a Hebrew child who grew up to be Mousos (Moses). Merris herself later became queen when she married pharaoh Khenephres, and Mousos was appointed to administer the land on his behalf. A popular prince, he led a successful military campaign against the invading Ethiopians, a success which elicited the jealousy of pharaoh Khenephres. Mousos was therefore forced to flee to Arabia but returned to Egypt to lead the Israelites to freedom when Khenephres died.

It is a strange coincidence, if coincidence is what it is, that the last pharaoh of the Early Dynastic Age, whom we have, for other reasons entirely, identified as the pharaoh of the Oppression, should bear the same name as the pharaoh identified as the ruler of the Exodus time in an ancient Jewish tradition.

We have already seen how the entire Early Dynastic epoch was punctuated by great upheavals of nature that left their mark both in human tradition and in the record in the ground. Stratigraphic evidence (as for example in Ur in Mesopotamia) shows that the last of these events terminated the Early Dynastic 2 age of that region. Yet the end of the Early Dynastic Age in Mesopotamia is fairly precisely dated to the end of the Third Dynasty in Egypt, and this is demonstrated by very precise cultural parallels. Thus we have the following:

Cultural Parallels

Sixth Dynasty (Pepi I and II)	Akkadian epoch (E. B. 3)
Fifth Dynasty (Sahura)	
Fourth Dynasty (Cheops, Chephren)	Sumerian Early Dynastic 3
	FLOOD EVENT
Second and Third Dynasties	Sumerian Early Dynastic 1 and 2
	FLOOD EVENT
Gerzean and First Dynasty	Jamdat Nasr
	FLOOD EVENT
Naqada I	Uruk Period
	GREAT FLOOD, LEAVING DEPOSIT THREE METERS DEEP
Early Badarian (parallels with Magdalenian)	'Ubaid

Textbook scholarship of course claims to know of no evidence from Egypt or elsewhere suggesting such a dramatic end to the Early Dynastic

epoch. The evidence is there in the Pessimistic Literature, but it has been misplaced.

In the chaotic conditions prevailing after the death of pharaoh Huni/Ka-nefer-ra, local potentates, some related to the royal family, rose to temporary prominence. These were the Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Dynasties of the so-called Intermediate Period. There was indeed an “Intermediate” epoch, but it was much shorter than is generally supposed. After a few months of lawlessness and chaos, order was restored to Egypt by Sneferu. Many of the dignitaries who rose to prominence during the crisis (Neferty’s princes who hold sway in the land) held onto their positions under the new regime, and these became the Intermediate Age dynasties. (It seems that it was actually one of the Akhety/Akhthoes princes who pursued the Israelites into the sea. Perhaps pharaoh Huni/Khenephres had been killed shortly before in the same cosmic upheaval. This interpretation of events makes better sense of the biblical account, which claims that the pharaoh, having decided to allow the Israelites to leave, then changed his mind and went after them). Whatever the truth, it is clear that all these lines of petty rulers should be placed contemporary with and parallel to the Old Kingdom pharaohs. During the reigns of Cheops, Chephren, Mycerinus and the rest, the Inyotefs and Akhetys continued, as provincial magistrates, to administer their own small regions of the Nile Valley. After the Hyksos Conquest however, one of these families, the Inyotefs of Thebes, took on the mantle of freedom fighters. The Akhety princes, however, became clients of the Hyksos, in whose name they waged war against the rulers of Thebes. These events, we suggest, occurred during the time of what is conventionally known as the Sixth Dynasty.

In time, from the ranks of the Theban princes, would come the kings who would drive the Hyksos from the land and found the mighty Eighteenth Dynasty.

In another place I have examined the reign of Sneferu in some detail.¹⁶¹ There it is shown how early in his reign he battled against various desert tribes, as well as Nubians, who sought to exploit Egypt’s moment of weakness. One of these tribes was the Amalekites, whom Sneferu repulsed in the Sinai Peninsula. These same Amalekites, an Arabian folk, were the people who had just weeks or perhaps months earlier attacked the Israelites fleeing eastwards out of Egypt. The epic battle at Rephidim, it was said, went

¹⁶¹ In *The Pyramid Age* (2nd ed. 2007).

in favor of the Israelites so long as Moses could hold his arms aloft. Judging by the complaints of the Pessimistic authors, it would appear fairly certain that the Amalekites (along perhaps with other tribes) actually entered and plundered Lower Egypt. They cannot have found much of value to take from a region so recently dealt such savage blows by nature. In the end, probably no more than a few weeks or months afterwards, Sneferu rallied the Egyptians, expelled the invaders, and restored order.

It seems likely that one of the legends associated with Sneferu, the story of the magician Djadjaemankh, who parted the waters of the royal lake after a servant-girl had lost a hair-pendant in the water, is a vague reflection of the parting of the waters at the Sea of Passage near Pi-Khiroth.

Later generations of Egyptians remembered Sneferu with fondness. He was known as “the Beneficent King” and his epoch viewed as a Golden Age.¹⁶² Indeed, Sneferu himself was recalled in terms not at all dissimilar to those of his contemporary Moses. Like Moses, he led his people through an unparalleled crisis to safety and security. But there was one other similarity. Just as Moses gave his people a new religion based on the worship of one invisible god, so the epoch of Sneferu saw in Egypt the abandonment of the old region of planet and star worship, with all its bloody rituals. From the start of the Fourth Dynasty a new type of religion emerged. The Pyramid Texts, which were probably composed in the Fourth Dynasty (though inscribed in the chambers of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty pyramids), the god Atum is described in terms that verge on monotheism. Furthermore, there is now evidence of a moral development that has astonished scholars. Commoners and kings express an awareness of moral issues hardly less advanced than those of classical Greece or Rome, or Christian Rome, for that matter. “It is,” wrote James Henry Breasted, “as it were, an isolated moral vista down which we look, penetrating the early gloom as a shaft of sunshine penetrates the darkness.”¹⁶³

The same shaft of sunshine, we might note, penetrated through the Burning Bush at Horeb and enlightened the minds of the Hebrews.

¹⁶² See, e.g., Rice, *Egypt's Making* (1990) pp. 197-8.

¹⁶³ J.H. Breasted, *The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912) p. 170.

HOREB, THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

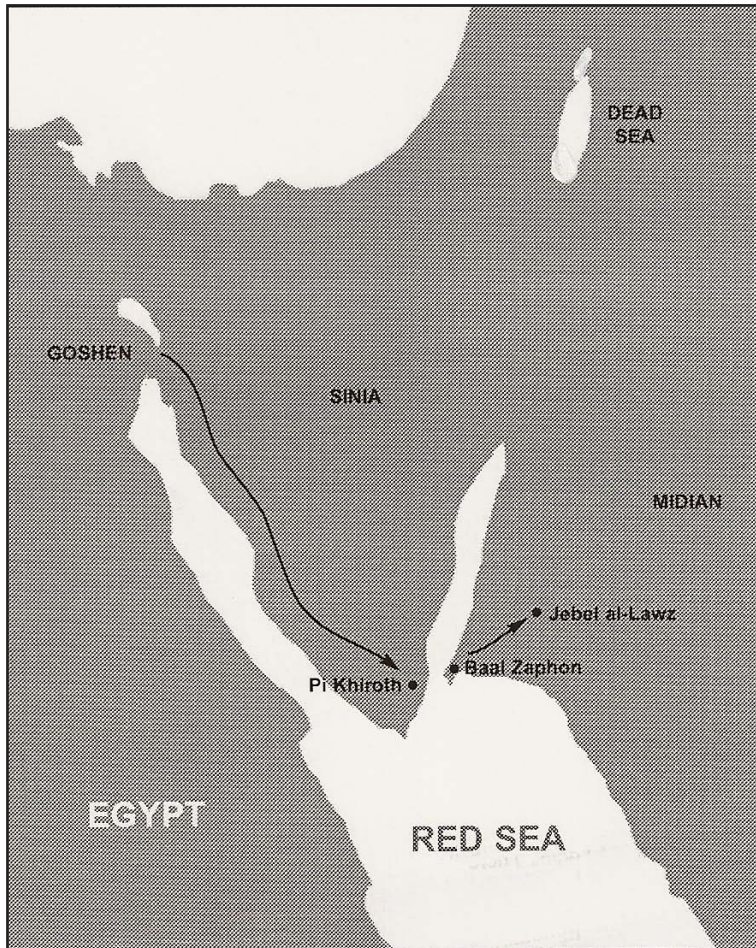
Both the El Arish shrine and the Book of Exodus identify a place called Pi Khiroth as the site of the dramatic events at the Sea of Passage. Biblical sources also link a place called Baal Zaphon to the same event. Quite possibly Pi Khiroth was on the Egyptian side of the sea, whilst Baal Zaphon, with its Semitic name, was on the opposite shore.

One of the perennial questions of biblical history is the location of this spot, so important to Jewish history. Another, related question, is the location of the Mountain of God, named Horeb or Sinai, on whose summit Moses is said to have received the Ten Commandments shortly after the dramatic escape at the *Yam Suf*. The official site of the latter is what is now called Mount Sinai on the Sinai Peninsula. Yet there is much evidence, both from the Scriptures themselves and from later Jewish tradition (as recorded, for example, in Josephus) which would suggest a location in north-western Arabia — ancient Midian. In fact, the Exodus account itself makes a location in Midian virtually inevitable, as Moses meets his father-in-law, Jethro (of Midian), *before* he ascends the holy mountain (Exodus 18).

The controversy has recently been ignited anew by two American writers/adventurers, Bob Cornuke and Larry Williams, who managed to get into Saudi Arabia — where tourism as such is illegal — and investigate the Midian region. What they found there was a strong local tradition about Moses and Jethro and an insistence that the nearby Jebel al-Lawz was Horeb, Moses' Mountain of God.¹⁶⁴ Although the Jebel al-Lawz has long been known to scholars as a possible candidate for Horeb, its claims have never received wide publicity, or been widely supported, owing mainly to the strength of tradition surrounding the so-called Mount Sinai, in the Sinai Peninsula, the location favored by Constantine the Great's mother Helena. After Helena's time, the claims of other sites were pushed into the background and gradually all but forgotten. Nor has the situation improved in recent years, when the attitude of the Saudi authorities has made archeological investigation in the Midian region all but impossible. Indeed, Jebel al-Lawz is now a forbidden region and it is a criminal offence (punishable by a very long jail sentence or perhaps worse) to climb it.

¹⁶⁴ Bob Cornuke and Larry Williams, *In Search of the Mountain of God* (Broadman and Holman Books, 2000).

FIGURE 18. ROUTE OF THE EXODUS.



Nevertheless, the mountain and its environs have been investigated by a few daring souls over the past decade and a half. One of these, David Fasold, was apprehended by the authorities and put on trial. Another, Ron Wyatt, did not actually climb the mountain, but claimed to have found, at the base of the peak, much evidence to corroborate its identification with Horeb/Sinai. The most successful investigation to date, the one that has renewed the debate, was by Cornuke and Williams, whose book, *In Search of the Mountain of God*, has caused something of a sensation. Like Wyatt, Cornuke and Wil-

Williams appear to have discovered much corroborating evidence in the environs of Jebel al-Lawz, such as for example carved images of an Egyptian-style cow-deity (Hathor), as well as a cyclopean altar upon which sacrifices could have been offered, but it is what they found at the summit that is the most interesting. The peak of the mountain was found to be blackened and scorched, as if by searing heat. The latter fact is actually readily observable from the ground. Now this is most strange, since the mountain is not a volcano. At the summit Williams, a trained geologist, examined some of the rocks, which he deemed to be composed of obsidian (volcanic glass) or a material closely resembling obsidian.¹⁶⁵ But, it is highly significant that, upon splitting the rocks open, the core was found to be unscorched, not obsidian, but of the original sandstone-like rock of the mountain.¹⁶⁶

Cornuke and Williams are both born-again Christians and for them this was nothing less than the physical evidence of one of the Bible's greatest miracles: the actual "Fire of God" which is said to have covered the peak of Horeb during the Israelites' sojourn there.

For the present writer, as a student of catastrophism, the evidence was scarcely less sensational. What force could have melted the rocks at the Jebel's summit, leaving them resembling volcanic glass? The most immediate answer is the immensely powerful thunderbolts which, Velikovsky insisted, were a fundamentally important (and terrifying) part of the phenomena surrounding the Exodus. An elevated spot like a mountain-top would of course be one of the prime targets of such divine bolts. And this is fully confirmed by the Book of Exodus. There we are told:

Now at daybreak ... there were peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, dense cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast; and, in the camp, all the people trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the bottom of the mountain. Mount Sinai was entirely wrapped in smoke, because Yahweh had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke rose like smoke from a furnace and the whole mountain shook violently.¹⁶⁷

So, yet another piece of evidence fits into place. Once again, it is the conventional scholars, and not the catastrophists, who are puzzled. If the Jebel al-Lawz was Horeb, this also means that Pi Khiroth and Baal Zaphon were

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.71-78.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Exodus 19: 16-19. It should be noted that the Mount Sinai in the Sinai Peninsula is neither volcanic nor does it display any signs of scorching. On this ground alone it seems a very unlikely candidate for Mount Horeb.

located on either side of the narrow Strait of Hormuz at the southern end of the Gulf of Aqaba. And this brings us onto another important consideration. The Gulf of Aqaba is part of the Great Rift Valley, a tectonic meeting point stretching from the Jordan Valley in the north to central Africa in the south. It is one of the world's most volcanically active regions. Now, it has been suggested by more than one writer that the parting of the waters could have been the result of an immense subterranean telluric force generating a powerful electro-magnetic charge which temporarily separated the shallow sea. And it is here, and here alone, at the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow entrance to the Gulf, that the sea is shallow enough to permit such a crossing. As Cornuke and Williams noted, a narrow underwater "causeway", running just a few meters below the sea's surface, connects the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula with the Arabian coast. On either side of this "causeway", the sea descends sharply into a deep trench. And it is quite possible that this underwater highway had a recent volcanic origin.

But if the Sea of Passage was at the Strait of Hormuz, why would Moses (or whoever it was led the fleeing Israelites) have taken the exiles so far south, into what is basically a dead end, at the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula? Could he have intended to ferry them across the Strait to his second home, Midian, possibly by boats composed of cow hides? Bearing in mind, however, that in those days the region was not so arid as now, and the whole Sinai Peninsula was covered with acacia and sycamore forests, it is possible that the intention was to construct wooden rafts or boats with which to effect the evacuation. The arrival of an Egyptian army bent on annihilating the slaves would, of course, have made such an enterprise impossible. It was just at this point, when the terrified fugitives seemed doomed to annihilation, that nature intervened and provided a seemingly miraculous means of escape.

The objection may be raised, as it frequently is, that such an event, happening at just the right time for the Israelites, is just too convenient, and therefore could not have happened. Yet coincidences do happen, and surely it was the extraordinary nature of this coincidence, as well as its timeliness, that convinced future generations of Israelites that they were a "chosen people". If not this, then how to explain such a strange idea?

If the Sea of Passage really was at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, as much evidence seems to indicate, no longer can the Yam Suf be dismissed

as a Sea of Reeds. The Israelites, it appears, crossed a real arm of the sea, an event which occurred under catastrophic conditions of some sort.

THE END OF A WORLD AGE

The catastrophic end of the Early Dynastic period, the Age of Sacrifice (as Hindu tradition names it) is very clearly marked in Mesopotamia by a flood layer, a layer which immediately preceded the rise of the Akkadians. No major upheavals of nature, on a similar scale, are reported afterwards. The true nature and extent of his upheaval has already been hinted at. This was the catastrophe that made a desert of the Sahara and, incredible as it may seem, shifted the positions of the Poles.

As we have seen earlier, Velikovsky believed that cosmic upheavals were occurring as recently as the early seventh century BC, and he linked these later events with the god and planet Mars. He argued that Mars had come on a near-collision course with the Great Comet (the Cosmic Serpent), and that a titanic “battle” in the skies, clearly witnessed by the inhabitants of the earth, ensued. As a result of this encounter the serpent lost its tail, or was “decapitated” (hence the world-wide myth of a decapitated dragon), and ceased to be a threat to our planet. However, the encounter between Mars and the comet destabilized the former and led to a further, final series of calamities on the earth.

The present writer concurs with Velikovsky’s analysis, incredible though it may seem, for the simple reason that no other equally plausible explanation has been forthcoming. Events which could dramatically and suddenly change the earth’s climate and shift the Poles must have been of truly cosmic dimensions. An asteroid or meteorite impact solution will simply not suffice. Furthermore, it has to be stressed that all ancient traditions speak of a time when there was an unstable Solar System, with the members of that system wandering confusedly throughout the firmament.

As I have argued in detail elsewhere, Moses is mythologically related to the god Mars and, more specifically, Mars’ alter-ego, Heracles.¹⁶⁸ Without going into the details here, it should be noted that, like Heracles, Moses was the enemy of the serpent-god, and his destruction of the two serpents of the pharaoh’s magicians recalls Heracles’ destruction of the two serpents sent

¹⁶⁸ See my *Pyramid Age* (2007).

by Hera to kill him in his cradle. Like Heracles, Moses had a mysterious birth, and there is a suggestion of a divine father. Certainly Moses' rescue from the waters of the Nile, to which he had been consigned in a basket, is precisely paralleled by that of Perseus (a dragon-slayer and Heracles alter-ego), who was rescued from the sea after being confined, along with his mother, in a sealed chest which his father cast adrift. Heracles' pushing apart of the Pillars at the Straits of Gibraltar, which henceforth bore his name, is rather obviously paralleled by Moses' "pushing apart" of the waters at the Sea of Passage, whilst Moses' end offers a very precise likeness to that of Heracles: Both men did not really die, in the normal sense, but disappeared from the view of men after ascending a mountain: Horeb in the case of Moses and Oeta in the case of Heracles.

In fact, the god/deity Mars or Ares is intimately connected to the whole Exodus drama, as is evinced by the participation in it of Michael, the archetypal dragon slayer. He it was who produced the pillar of fire which blocked the path of the pharaoh's army as it approached the trapped Israelites. Velikovsky admitted the central importance of Michael in the narrative, but curiously failed to identify him as a Mars/Heracles figure. This was no doubt due to the fact that, adhering strictly to the chronology of the Bible, Velikovsky believed the Exodus to have occurred around 1450 BC, at the very time of the Ishtar/comet catastrophe. To have placed Moses in what Velikovsky described as the Age of Mars (i.e., the eighth and seventh centuries BC) would have implied a radical questioning of biblical chronology, something he could not countenance.

And this highlights our major point of disagreement with Velikovsky. Whilst Velikovsky more or less accepted the dates provided in the textbooks for the rise of the Near Eastern cultures (i.e., circa 3200 BC) — a date which was, of course, originally founded on biblical time scales — the findings of the present volume suggest that no high civilization existed anywhere before circa 1100 BC. This of course implies a radical reinterpretation of the stratigraphy, as well as a re-examination of the historical events described in Genesis and Exodus, with a view to finding how they relate to the stratigraphy. We can agree with Velikovsky that there was an Age of Istar/Venus in the mid- to second-half of the first millennium BC and an Age of Mars in the ninth, eighth and seventh centuries BC, but these World Ages cannot be connected to the biblical events to which they have been linked

by Velikovsky. Ishtar/Venus was the goddess of the Flood, as all ancient mythologies make perfectly clear. Her epoch is rightly placed in the second half of the second millennium BC but has nothing whatsoever to do with the Exodus, which was clearly linked to Mars/Heracles. This means, in effect, that the last of the catastrophic destructions which left their signature at Ur in Mesopotamia, the disaster which brought to an end the Early Dynastic Age, must be dated around the middle of the ninth century BC.

This then marks the last of the great cosmic upheavals. They did not continue into the seventh century BC, as Velikovsky believed, though evidence shows that during the eighth and even seventh centuries our planet continued to be affected by vast earthquakes and tremors, as the tectonic system gradually stabilized after the last great cosmic quake. Yet these were in the nature of “after-shocks” and cannot be compared with the truly cataclysmic events occurring earlier.

This final cataclysm left its signature throughout the planet. There were immense and sudden changes in climate everywhere. Powerful and prolonged earthquake activity accompanied these changes. In some areas land and sea changed places. From this epoch comes the stories, recalled in almost every culture, of sunken or lost kingdoms. These stories are particularly prevalent along the western seaboard of Europe, where for example the Irish told of a sunken land named Hy Brasil, the Welsh of the lost regions of Llys Helig and Cantref Gwaelod and the Bretons of the sunken kingdom of Lyonesse. These are well-known, yet every single western European nation, as well as the nations of North Africa, has a similar legend. It might be noted also that the native peoples of the Americas, on the other side of the ocean, have almost identical traditions.

There seems little doubt that these stories are connected with, or perhaps were the source of, the Atlantis myth.

It was not only the Israelites who set out in search of a new home in the midst of these dramatic events. Vast population movements occurred universally. Traditions in western Europe for example make it abundantly clear that it was these events which spurred the first of the great Celtic migrations. Traditions in both Ireland and Wales insist that the Celtic ancestors of these nations arrived in the British Isles amidst violent upheavals of nature. We are told of great inundations of the sea, of rivers and lakes appearing and disappearing overnight and of frightening portents in the skies.

The same traditions tell us in no uncertain terms that the vast megalithic structures which still dot the landscape of these regions were raised in the immediate aftermath of these events. It has already been noted of course that the megalith-building epoch is a phenomenon directly related to the final catastrophic episode. These monuments, built securely of enormous polygonal blocks of stone to withstand the seismic disturbances of the period, were intended to be temples cum observatories, where religious rituals were enacted to ensure the continuing stability of the cosmic order.

In this regard it should be noted that in Stonehenge the lintels are secured to the uprights with mortise and tenon joints, a feature completely redundant in the earthquake-free environment of modern Britain, but by no means redundant in the environment described in Welsh and Irish literature.

CHAPTER 5. MOSES AND HIS WORKS

THE AUTHORSHIP OF GENESIS

According to tradition, the Pentateuch or Torah (i.e., the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Numbers) was written by Moses. This claim had always been accepted as substantially true until the middle of the nineteenth century, when scholarship turned an increasingly critical eye to the Scriptures. After the Evolution controversy had discredited the first part of Genesis, a whole new genre of biblical exegesis arose. The main proponents of this new thinking were the scholars of the Berlin School, whose work during the last decades of the nineteenth century systematically demolished the credibility of much of the Old Testament. Finally, under the influence of men such as Eduard Meyer, Karl Heinrich Graf and Julius Wellhausen, the very existence of major biblical figures was called into question. It was demonstrated by Graf and Wellhausen that the Torah was the work of more than one author and was a comparatively late composition, probably dating from no earlier than the sixth or seventh century BC. Two main contributors (named the Yahwist and the Elohist authors) were initially identified, though over the years that number has been added to. Modern biblical scholars in fact now talk of at least four contributors or groups of contributors. In addition to the Yahwist and Elohist, two other major traditions are identified: one known as the Deuteronomic, which introduced additions and revisions by Levites after the fall of the Kingdom of Israel; and one the work

of editors after the Exile, known as the priestly tradition. One of the latter is named the Redactor and identified (somewhat tentatively) as Ezra, who is reckoned to have flourished sometime in the fifth century BC or later.

The end result of these discoveries has been a veritable debunking of early Hebrew tradition. We are told:

There is no agreement on just how the final Torah was produced. Documentary approaches such as Wellhausen's classic formulation see it as an act of redaction, in which an editor (usually seen as Ezra) took the four sources — a 9th century Yahwist, 8th century Elohist, and 6th century Priestly source (the Deuteronomist is not present in Exodus) — and combined them with minimal changes. Thus Richard Elliott Friedman's *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (2003) is a modern documentary hypothesis more or less identical with Wellhausen but accepting Yehezkel Kaufmann's dating of the Priestly source to the early 7th century. By contrast, John Van Seters and Rolf Rendtorff see the Torah as a process of progressive supplementation in which generations of authors added to and edited each other, although Van Seters sees the final author as a late, 5th century, Yahwist, Rendtorff as a Priestly school. R. N. Whybray, whose *The Making of the Pentateuch* (1987) was a seminal critique of the methodology and assumptions of the documentary hypothesis, has proposed that the creation of Exodus and the Torah was the action of a single author, working from a host of fragments. The only areas of agreement between these views is that the terms "Yahwist", "Priestly" and "Deuteronomist" do have some meaning in terms of identifiable and differentiable content and style, and that the final Torah emerged in the 5th century BC.¹⁶⁹

Thus the Torah, it is now accepted, could not possibly be attributed to Moses, even if such a person existed. If however the Exodus occurred during the ninth century BC, as we claim, the question of the book's authorship takes on an entirely new meaning. If this is correct, it becomes perfectly reasonable to assume that a body of material dating from the time of the Exodus could have formed the foundations of the Torah — even if we accept the later refinements of the various other contributors and editors.

I do not thereby suggest for one minute that these books were written by a man named Moses during years of wandering in the desert. Van Seters for example proved that much of Genesis, including the entire Abraham narrative, can only have received its present form in the seventh century or even later.¹⁷⁰ The whole work is full of anachronisms. One example worthy of mention is the occurrence of camels in the patriarch stories. Abraham and his contemporaries are said in Genesis to have regularly employed camels. Yet it is well-known that dromedaries were not domesticated until the sev-

¹⁶⁹ "Exodus" <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exodus>.

¹⁷⁰ John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (Yale, 1975).

enth century BC.¹⁷¹ Again, the story of the six days of creation is evidently a late monotheistic attempt to explain why the week has seven days, without recourse to mentioning the celestial gods whom the days were named for (i.e. the five planets visible to the naked eye, plus the sun and moon).

Thus the Book of Genesis almost certainly dates from the period of strictly enforced monotheism — namely the Persian Age; and we can agree with Van Seters that the work we now possess, in the form we have it, dates from that time. The Book of Exodus itself presents similar problems. The story of Moses' birth and infancy, for example, have all the iconographic hallmarks of the mythical divine child, and the story's relationship to other myths of the same type hardly needs to be stressed. Thus Perseus, for example, is also placed in a chest or box and cast into the waters, and this is a fate shared too by the Celtic god Lugh or Lugos. Again, in the present study, we have proposed locating the Exodus narrative in the Early Bronze Age (though we have brought this epoch down into the tenth and ninth centuries BC), which means that Moses' story too contains many anachronisms. The mention of chariots, for example, both in the Joseph and Moses narratives, can only be anachronistic, since such machines were unknown in Egypt prior to the time of the Hyksos, which we place in the eighth century BC. And the same may be said of various other details of the two books.

The Berlin scholars were thus correct in saying that the Torah we now possess, in the form that we have it, could not have taken shape before the sixth or even fifth century BC. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to suppose that the seventh and sixth century editors had pre-existing sources upon which to work. If Moses led the Israelites from Egypt in the ninth century, it is quite probable that a body of sayings, hymns and poems attributed to the great man were there to be worked upon.

If such a body of material did exist, most or all of it should have entered the Torah in its final form. We would expect to be able to detect such material by its obvious Egyptian influence. Moses, after all, was a prince of Egypt who threw in his lot with the Hebrew slaves, and those slaves themselves

171 The earliest illustration of the domesticated dromedary comes from Neo-Assyrian bas-reliefs believed to date from the seventh century BC. In reality, however, these belong to the fifth century, as the Neo-Assyrian king responsible, Ashurbanipal, is actually an alter-ego of the Persian Darius II. (See my *Ramesses, Medes and Persians*, 2007).

had probably, during their long stay in the land of the Nile, absorbed many elements of Egyptian culture.

Does the Torah then display any such influence?

Over the past number of years research has demonstrated that the entire Pentateuch is permeated with material of Egyptian origin, a fact that was totally unexpected and which has astonished the critics. The problem is that scholars such as Graf and Wellhausen reached their conclusions before Egyptology had fully matured, and they were unable to identify as Egyptian those elements that are now openly recognized as such. The definitive work on this, A.S. Yahuda's *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian*, came out in 1933. As an Egyptologist with intimate knowledge of Hebrew, Yahuda was uniquely qualified to tackle the subject, and what he discovered shattered many of the conclusions of the Berlin exegetes.

Yahuda's great work, which is of such fundamental importance in understanding the Patriarch epoch, has been only grudgingly accepted by the scholarly world. However, a full-blooded reappraisal has now been undertaken by three Australian scholars: Damien Mackey, Frank Calneggia and Paul Money. In an article entitled, "A Critical Reappraisal of the Book of Genesis", Mackey, Calneggia and Money trace the development of Yahuda's thought and add some pertinent observations of their own.¹⁷² Yahuda, they hold, "throws out a challenge" to biblical hypercriticism. His line of argument is that, "if by comparison with Egyptian it could be proved that the Egyptian influence on Hebrew was 'so extensive that the development and perfection of this language can only be accounted for and explained by that influence,' then it would be quite clear that it can only have happened in 'common Hebrew-Egyptian environment!'"¹⁷³ The only period in Israelite history "during which there existed the sort of close intimacy necessary for that degree of influence of Egyptian on the Hebrew language ... was the 'Egyptian Epoch'."¹⁷⁴

Yahuda held that the hundred years or so during which the Israelites were exiled in Egypt must have made a profound impact on the language and culture of the people. The Canaanite dialect which they brought to Egypt could not but have absorbed Egyptian elements, "and in the adapta-

172 Mackey, Calneggia and Money, "A Critical Reappraisal of the Book of Genesis," *Society for Interdisciplinary Studies: Catastrophism and Chronology Workshop* No.2 (1987).

173 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

174 *Ibid.*

tion to the Egyptian [must] have continued to develop, to extend, and even to modify its original grammatical form and syntactical structure.”¹⁷⁵ Yahuda explained that the influence of one language upon another was revealed by three major characteristics:

- the adoption of loan-words;
- the coining of new words and expressions, which could include technical terms, metaphors and turns of speech;
- the adoption of grammatical elements and some of the syntactical rules of the alien tongue.

Yahuda showed quite clearly that all three conditions were met in early Hebrew, and that this was observable primarily in the language of the Torah, that part of the Bible attributed to Moses.

EGYPTIAN ELEMENTS IN THE CREATION AND FLOOD STORIES

Contrary to popular belief, the Hebrew account of creation does not owe its origin to the Babylonian. Mesopotamian influences there are, but these are primeval, and do not derive from the period of the Babylonian Exile. Yet, as Mackey, Calneggia and Money demonstrate in some detail, the Hebrew creation story is also heavily permeated with Egyptian elements. As Yahuda himself showed, the only parts of the Bible that actually do show an unmistakable late Babylonian influence are those parts which deal with the Babylonian Exile and events subsequent to it. Mackey, Calneggia and Money remark how, “it is an amazing fact that where there are similar details in the Genesis account of Creation and in the Akkadian myths, almost without exception the Akkadian uses different words and expressions from the Hebrew. Yahuda notes that whilst some Akkadian words and expressions were used in the Hebrew, they do not occur in the Genesis story. But it is quite another matter when we come to consider the dependence of the Genesis narratives on Egyptian. Whilst, perhaps, we may have expected a strong Egyptian influence on that part of the Book of Genesis which deals with Joseph and the ‘Egyptian Epoch’ of Israel, we find that *the entire book* is saturated with Egyptian elements.”¹⁷⁶ The conclusion Yahuda drew from this was that the whole of Genesis was “written from an Egyptian perspective.”¹⁷⁷

175 A.S. Yahuda, *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian* (1933) p. xxxiii.

176 Mackey, Calneggia and Money, loc. cit.

177 A.S. Yahuda, loc. cit. p. xxix.

The total evidence is substantial, but the following may be regarded as a representative sample.

The Hebrew term *bereshith*, which begins the Creation story, is found on close inspection to be “an exact adaptation of the Egyptian expression *tpy.t*, [which means] ... ‘earliest time’ or ‘primeval time’. Just as *bereshith* is formed from the Hebrew word for ‘head’, so also is the Egyptian word formed for the word for ‘head’.”¹⁷⁸

Uniquely amongst the Semitic languages, the Hebrew word for “heaven” was supposedly derived from the Akkadian Tiamat, the monster of darkness which Marduk slew and which was reputed to have sent the Flood. However, it is clear that neither Tiamat nor anything resembling such a monster occurs in the Genesis account. Indeed, since there are virtually no points of similarity between the Hebrew and Babylonian creation stories, “there is [therefore] no intrinsic ground whatever for the identification of *tehem* with *tiamat*.”¹⁷⁹

In the Hebrew Garden of Eden there was “every kind of tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food” (Gen. 2:9). The Egyptians too had their “Garden of God”, *ken ntr*, where there grew all kinds of trees with sweet fruits, such as sycamores, figs, dates and vines and other “lovely trees”, *ht ndm*.¹⁸⁰ Of even more importance however is the fact that among the trees of the Egyptian Paradise was also the “Tree of Life”.¹⁸¹ Yahuda went into some detail on this and was very explicit that the Egyptian *ht n 'nh*, “Tree of Life”, “corresponds literally with the Hebrew phrase in Genesis 2:9.”¹⁸²

The term applied to the serpent in Genesis (which is made to crawl on its belly) also has its exact parallel in Egyptian terminology. According to Yahuda, it is the equivalent of the Egyptian *hyr ht-f*, “that (which goes) on its belly”, a term applied to snakes and reptiles generally. Also, the condemnation of the serpent to the eating of dust is paralleled precisely in the Egyptian verse, “Behold their sustenance [food] shall be Geb [earth]”.

Yahuda held that the Flood story proved his thesis that the Babylonian legends were later versions of the Hebrew originals, a view which the present author cannot subscribe to. Nevertheless, he does demonstrate fairly con-

178 Mackey, Calneggia and Money, loc. cit. p. 5.

179 Ibid., p. 6.

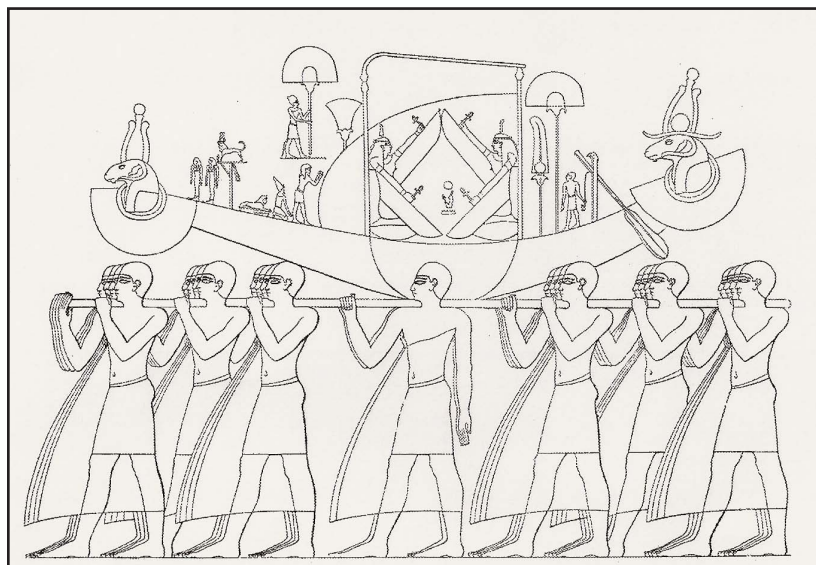
180 Ibid.

181 Ibid.

182 Yahuda, loc. cit. p. 193.

vincingly that the Hebrew story is an archaic original, not a late derivation of the Babylonian myth. Crucially, the main feature of the Genesis Flood story, the Ark, is designated neither by an Akkadian word nor a Canaanite one, but an Egyptian one. The Hebrew word used (*tebhah*) has been recognized as deriving from the Egyptian *db.t*, a “box”, “coffer”, or “chest”. In the words of Yahuda, “It is astonishing that a narrative supposedly set in Babylonia, uses for the Ark an Egyptian loan-word!”¹⁸³

FIGURE 18. SACRED BARQUE OF AMON, TIME OF THUTMOSE III — LIKE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.



Mackey, Calneggia and Money stress here that the same Hebrew word also occurs in the story of the discovery of the child Moses. We should note too that in Egyptian legend it is in a *db.t* or chest that Osiris is imprisoned before being cast into the Nile by Set, and we have already suggested a close link between some elements in the stories of Moses and Osiris. The very chest of Osiris, we are told by the Egyptians, floated down the Nile and was washed up in Canaan (in Byblos). According to Mackey, Calneggia and Money, the use of the Egyptian term *tebhah* in both the Flood and Moses stories is highly significant and calls for a comparative look at the two accounts. “Such a comparison,” they say, “is all the more instructive for our whole thesis as, on the one hand, it clearly reveals the Egyptian character of the Flood nar-

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 205.

rative and, on a secondary level, shows how much more powerfully Egyptian influences prevailed in the Exodus narrative. Whereas here for the nature of timber and the kind of pitch, the Akkadian words *giparu* and *kupru* are traceable, the Egyptian word *kmc*, 'Nile rushes', is used to denominate the material of the ark of Moses."¹⁸⁴

This of course is just as it should be. Originating in Mesopotamia around 1100 BC, the Hebrews themselves introduced much of the culture of that region into Egypt. The Flood was the most important event of early folk-tradition, and we must regard it as highly unlikely that all of the Mesopotamian elements of that story could have been lost, even after a prolonged stay in Egypt. By the time of the Exodus, however, around 840 BC, the Hebrews had absorbed much of Egyptian culture. The very names of three of the most important Exodus characters, Moses, Phineas and Hophni, are recognizably Egyptian. Now even events linked to Mesopotamia began to be viewed through the lens of Egyptian culture. Thus the Ark of Noah is called by an Egyptian name; so too, it should be said, is the Ark of the Covenant, wherein the nomadic Israelites house the commandments that Yahweh bequeathed to Moses atop the holy mountain.

The Ark of the Covenant, as a sacred barque, has other links to Egypt. For many ancient peoples the boat had religious connotations. But among the people of the Nile valley the boat was *par excellence* the vessel in which the gods travelled. Above all, the sun-god was endlessly portrayed in his sacred barque sailing across the skies during the day and in the seas of the Underworld at night. The Ark of the Covenant was almost certainly a vessel of this type.

Thus all of Genesis and Exodus is full of Egyptian phrases, terms, idioms and cultural influence in general. When we look at the Joseph narrative, which takes up almost a quarter of Genesis, we find the same to be true, only more so. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 3, the Joseph narrative is so thoroughly Egyptian in character that a number of commentators (and not just Yahuda) regard these chapters as based on original Egyptian documentary material.

As we have seen, Joseph's life-story agrees very closely with that of the great Imhotep, who was himself apparently named after the Syrian/Canaanite god Im-Saphon. One important detail of the Joseph narrative not already

¹⁸⁴ Mackey, Calneggia and Money, loc. cit. p. 6.

alluded to is that of Joseph's life span. We are told that he died at the ripe old age of 110. Once again, this reflects Egyptian usage — specifically archaic Egyptian usage. On the famous Papyrus Prisse, for example, which almost certainly dates from the Hyksos period, 110 years is declared to be the ideal lifespan, whilst on the Papyrus Anastasia IV, dating from the same period, we read, "Fulfil 110 years on the earth, whilst thy limbs are vigorous."¹⁸⁵ Also, a granite statue in Vienna is inscribed with a prayer to Isis to grant health and happiness for 110 years.

The fact that the above parallels are with Hyksos-age usage underlines what we have already suggested, namely, that Moses and the Exodus were either contemporary with, or slightly preceded, the Hyksos epoch.

In view of the all-pervading Egyptian influence in Genesis and the rest of the Torah, it must, we conclude, be regarded as perfectly feasible that a figure whom tradition named "Moses" could have composed parts of these texts as a form of epic poem, or rather series of poems, using the traditions of the Hebrews combined with those of the Egyptians. When the Jewish scribes of a later age came to compiling their traditions in an orderly form, they would no doubt then have had at their disposal a large body of "Moses" material, all claiming to date from the time of the great leader but much of which would have been added during the period of Wandering and the Judges. Some of this material they "updated" and "improved", adding, for example, to the Patriarch narratives the mention of camels because at their time all great leaders should have possessed many camels.

Such updating and re-editing no doubt occurred many times before the Torah we now possess took its final shape. But the original ancient core of the literature remained largely untouched and formed the basis of the final version. That ancient core, we suggest, is the work of the "Yahwist" author. Scholarship regards this material as dating from the 9th or 8th century, precisely where we, for other reasons entirely, have placed Moses and the Exodus. Yahweh, as the Torah itself hints on numerous occasions, was peculiarly the God of Moses. It therefore seems perfectly reasonable to suppose that the "Yahwist" work was the body of literature dating from the Exodus or shortly thereafter round which the later Torah was constructed.

185 Gaston Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilisation* (London, 1884) p. 198.

MOSES THE LAWGIVER

Moses was the lawgiver *par excellence* of Hebrew history. To him were attributed the voluminous rules, regulations and commandments laid down in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The laws and customs governing the lives of pious Jews almost all owe their origin to Moses.

Now the legal and moral code set down in the Pentateuch is by no means unique in the ancient world. Other nations had their legal codes set down in sacred books, and these were also composed by prophets and seers. Thus for example the Persians had their Zend Avesta, written by Zarathustra, founder of Zoroastrianism. In the Greek world, too, there were moral and legal codes set down by prophetic figures. We may mention the laws of Lycurgus of Sparta, a system that may be regarded as a Greek version of the Mosaic code.¹⁸⁶ Roughly contemporary with Lycurgus was the Athenian lawgiver, Medon. He it was who abolished the monarchy and set up the system of life-archons, as well as establishing many of the customs and institutions by which the Athenians ever-afterwards lived.¹⁸⁷ In Rome, too, we find that Romulus, the semi-legendary founder of the city, was regarded as a great legislator, and many of Rome's most enduring customs and institutions were attributed to him.¹⁸⁸

The problem with the above figures is that they all date from the eighth or seventh centuries BC. Zarathustra, for example, is said to have been born around 625 BC. The epoch of Lycurgus is less clearly defined, but using the Spartan king-lists of Herodotus we may calculate that he too lived sometime in the seventh century. Romulus is said to have founded Rome in 732 BC.

These facts clearly illustrate something well-known to the Berlin exegetes: namely that the Mosaic Code could not possibly date from earlier than the eighth or seventh century BC. The entire religious, cultural, historical and even linguistic context of the Mosaic Law is clearly that of the eighth/seventh century. It was on precisely these grounds that Wellhausen and the others cast doubt on the historical value of the entire Torah. Since it was

186 The most extensive description of Lycurgus and his epoch is contained in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.

187 See, e.g., A.R. Burn, *The Lyric Age of Greece* (London, 1967) p. 22.

188 Livy, *The Early History of Rome* i, 7; "Having performed with proper ceremony his religious duties, he [Romulus] summoned his subjects and gave them laws, without which the creation of a unified body politic would not have been possible."

obvious that the books of the Mosaic Law belonged to the great epoch of lawmaking and law-giving from the eighth century to the sixth, how could a man named Moses have led the Israelites from Egypt in the fifteenth century, as the Scriptures claimed?

A veritable religious and cultural revolution therefore occurred throughout the ancient world during the eighth and seventh centuries, though why this should be the case has never been adequately explained. Indeed, until Velikovsky, no explanation at all had been forthcoming. However, as we saw in Chapter 1, Velikovsky's thesis would suggest that catastrophic episodes inspired revolutionary change in all spheres of life. It has been shown, for example, that the cataclysms of the Abraham/Menes epoch (which we date to circa 1100 BC) helped to inaugurate literate civilization. It was the disasters of that time which initiated the practice of blood sacrifice and prompted the erection of the first temples in which to perform them.

In the same way, then, the great disasters of the ninth/eighth century inspired another cultural revolution. It can be shown, for example, how the megalith-building epoch (and I include in this the huge smooth-sided pyramids of Fourth Dynasty Egypt and the tholos tombs of Greece, as well as the megaliths of western Europe) began during the latter ninth and eighth century. These structures were erected of enormous blocks of stone specifically to withstand the continual earth-tremors that were so much a feature of the period. But the reason for building the monuments lay in the skies rather than on the earth. Events in the heavens produced a religious revolution. In his description of Cheops, Herodotus (who incidentally, much to the discomfort of historians, placed the Pyramid Age squarely in the mid-eighth century) clearly described the builder of the Great Pyramid as a religious reformer. We are told that he closed Egypt's temples and that they remained closed during the reign of his successor Chephren.¹⁸⁹ It was in the temples, of course, that the blood sacrifices which had been the hallmark of the Early Dynastic epoch were performed.¹⁹⁰

The movement away from blood sacrifice was to become symptomatic of all the religious innovations of the ninth, eighth and seventh centuries. Thus, in Greece of the Heroic Age (which is properly placed between the ninth and seventh centuries) we find numerous characters involved in abolishing hu-

¹⁸⁹ Herodotus, ii, 123.

¹⁹⁰ See Chapter 1 "Stairways to Heaven"; also Gunnar Heinsohn, "The Rise of Blood Sacrifice and Priest-Kingship in Mesopotamia: A 'Cosmic Decree?'" *Religion* (1992) 22, 109-134.

man sacrifice. Theseus, for example, is performing precisely that role when he slays the man-eating Minotaur, housed in the recesses of the Labyrinth at Knossos. The same achievement is repeatedly accredited to the god Hercules (Herakles), a contemporary of Theseus, who is said to have abolished human sacrifice in Egypt, among other places.¹⁹¹

The identity of Hercules, and his relationship to the era of Moses, as well as to Samson and the Judges, is a subject I deal with extensively in another place.¹⁹² Here it is sufficient to emphasize that the links between Greece's Heroic Age and the Hebrew Age of the Judges are numerous and compelling and that, furthermore, the various Heroic Age characters of Greece belong after the first Olympiad, an event traditionally placed in the year 776 BC.

Thus the religious innovations of the eighth/ninth century BC touched every aspect of human existence, manifesting themselves most visibly in the construction of immense temples and pyramidal structures, as well as in an outpouring of religious, philosophical and legal works. It became an age of sages, seers and prophets, men who had been inspired by the awesome events of the time. In Egypt, the epoch was marked by the religious reforms of Cheops, as well as by the numerous great sages of the Pyramid Age, whose words continued to inspire men for generations to come.

It was the same story much further afield. In India, this was the age of Krishna, whose timeless wisdom is enshrined in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The latter is a small component of the epic *Mahabharata*, whose images of cosmic battles amongst the celestial gods is rightly celebrated. In China, the same epoch saw the appearance of the Taoist sages, some of whom are also connected to events of cosmic dimensions. Similar stories are told amongst the peoples of Western Europe, as well as those of the New World. This epoch of prophecy is a truly universal phenomenon, yet it was not a phenomenon confined to the ninth and eighth centuries. The forces set in motion at that time continued to throw up great philosophers and thinkers for another two centuries. Thus the Hebrew prophets Elijah and Elisha were prominent in their condemnation of lapses from the Mosaic Law (especially regarding hu-

191 I.e., when he killed the Egyptian king Busiris, who attempted to offer him as a sacrifice. On Hercules and human sacrifice, see Robert Graves *The Greek Myths* Vol.1 (Pelican Books, 1955) p. 226. Moses, who also abolished human sacrifice ("Thou Shalt not Kill"), shares many features with Hercules. Thus for example, Hercules strangles two serpents sent to destroy him, whilst Moses' rod devours the two serpents sent against him by the Egyptian priests.
192 In my *Pyramid Age* (New York 2007).

man sacrifice) during the seventh century.¹⁹³ By the sixth century the movement away from blood sacrifice reached its apogee, with seers of the time sounding forth in condemnation even of animal sacrifice. In Israel, this movement is represented most clearly by Isaiah, whose attack on blood sacrifice is justly celebrated. Isaiah described these ceremonies as “abominations”.¹⁹⁴ In Greece, the movement is represented by Pythagoras, the great seer of the sixth century, who preached vegetarianism.¹⁹⁵ From the same epoch in India we have the Buddha, who of all the seers and prophets of the age was perhaps the most antagonistic towards the religions of cruelty and slaughter that hitherto prevailed.

It is evident then that all the great world religions were formulated between the ninth and sixth centuries BC and that the religion and philosophy attributed to Moses could only, as the Berlin exegetes insisted, have belonged to that epoch.

193 The epoch of the Israelite Kings actually commences around 720 BC., with Solomon for example reigning roughly between 700 and 680 BC. The true position of the Israelite monarchies is subject to a detailed examination in my *The Ramessides, Medes and Persians* (New York, 2007).

194 Isaiah, 66:3-4.

195 See, e.g., Ovid, *Metamorphoses* xi,80-470.

EPILOGUE

Our meander through the winding roads of ancient history has led us on a strange path. Our search has brought us face to face with characters and events unknown to conventional history books. We began with the discovery of one cataclysmic upheaval of nature and ended with another. The first of these, we found, directly preceded, by a few generations, the rise of high civilization and the life of Menes, legendary founder of the Egyptian kingdom. It was to this period also that Abraham, father of the Jewish nation, belonged. By synchronizing the stories of these two ancient peoples we were enabled to illuminate the very beginnings of human history. All this would have been impossible without the imaginative leap provided by Velikovsky's catastrophism. Once we accept that world-wide catastrophes actually occurred, it becomes relatively easy to synchronize the histories of the ancient civilizations. Without this, it would probably have been impossible ever to achieve the agreement between Egyptian and Hebrew histories that has been reached in the present volume. Irrespective of whether Abraham was an historical person or a tribal deity, the father of the Jews assumed all the characteristics of the god Thoth/Mercury, who was linked to one of these ancient disasters in particular. This "Abraham" catastrophe, or the disaster of the celestial tower, can actually be identified in the stratigraphies of the Near Eastern sites. Above all, Abraham was accredited with initiating civilization and sacrifice because the events of his time produced a crisis that was

resolved only by the invention of the elements of civilized life. The gods that threatened destruction had to be appeased with sacrifice, and high temples modeled on the celestial hill had to be erected in which to perform these sacrifices. Also, careful attention had to be paid to the movements of the celestial bodies in their wanderings through the heavens.

Thus it appears that the impulse behind the rise of civilization may have been, in one sense at least, religious. A crisis of almost unimaginable dimensions produced what can only be described as a collective psychosis, a psychosis that was resolved through the establishment of sacrificial rituals.

Precisely the same forces were operative throughout the globe, and wherever we go in the world at this time we find parallel traditions. Conditions being favorable, settled metal-using cultures sprang up. In this way it is possible to place the beginnings of a Copper Age civilization in Egypt, in Palestine, in Anatolia, in Mesopotamia, in Europe, in India, in China and in the Americas, around 1100 BC. More work will have to be done on all these areas in order to verify this statement for each culture.

The possibilities thus opened by this "catastrophist chronology" need hardly be stressed. Events from the histories of different nations can be synchronized with an exactness that would have been otherwise impossible. Suddenly, as if at the behest of some magic spell, early Hebrew history for example is transported from the realms of half-forgotten myth and legend into that of history proper. From the first meeting of Egyptians and Hebrews, recalled in the story of Abraham, the histories of the two peoples form a perfect match, complementing each other and affording new insights at every turn. Thus Egyptian history adds greatly to our knowledge of Joseph, whose story takes up a quarter of Genesis. In his Egyptian guise of Imhotep we find Joseph being honored not only as a seer and administrator, but also as an architect and physician. In like manner, the Egyptian accounts of the Exodus, preserved in the various "Pessimistic" treatises, fill in various details omitted from the Hebrew Scriptures. We have, for example, been able to identify the pharaoh of the Oppression as Huni, last ruler of the Third Dynasty, whilst the monarch drowned in the Sea of Passage was in all probability the first of the Akhthoes (Akhety) monarchs.

We ended our investigation with the Exodus, on the eve of the Israelites' epic journey to their Promised Land, an event we synchronized with the beginnings of Egypt's Pyramid Age, the epoch during which the pharaohs

of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Dynasties raised the mighty monuments that have become synonymous with the Kingdom of the Nile and its civilization. These monuments were in fact raised specifically to mark the great cosmic events recalled in the Book of Exodus. As the Israelites wandered in the desert and around the fringes of Canaan, the Egyptians were engaged in raising these wonderful structures.

Yet all these events, we found, occurred as recently as the ninth/eighth centuries BC. Within half a century of the Exodus, Egypt was invaded by the Assyrians, a nation known as Hyksos in the hieroglyphic records. In another place I demonstrate in some detail how these Hyksos are identical to the dynasty archeologists designate as the Sixth. The Assyrian conquerors adopted Egyptian names and styled themselves as pharaohs. They looked especially to the cosmic dragon Apop as their tutelary deity.

The destruction of Assyrian/Hyksos power in the south saw the rise of Egypt herself, under the mighty Eighteenth Dynasty, as an Imperial Power. It can be shown that these events were contemporary with the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy under Saul and David. Thus the Hebrew United Kingdom, which in conventional history books is placed centuries after the Egyptian New Kingdom, was in fact contemporary with it. But surely, it might be said, the histories of these two great empires are known in detail. How is it then that they do not refer to each other in their chronicles and inscriptions? Where, for example, do the Egyptians mention Solomon, and where, on the other hand, do the Hebrews mention pharaohs such as Thutmose III?

As a matter of fact, the two rulers mentioned above do figure in the records of both nations. Indeed, the histories of Eighteenth Dynasty Egypt and United Kingdom Israel can be made to synchronize in a most dramatic way. That synchronization was illustrated as early as 1952 in Velikovsky's seminal *Ages in Chaos*. There it was shown in great detail how Ahmose, who chased the Hyksos from Egypt, was truly contemporary with Saul and David, who battled against the same nation as well as their allies in Palestine, the Philistines and Amalekites. There also he showed that Queen Hatshepsut, whose greatest feat was to visit the fabulous Divine Land, was actually the Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon in Jerusalem. There too he illustrated how Thutmose III, who plundered the fabulously opulent temple of Kadesh, was

none other than the pharaoh Shishak, who plundered the temple of Jerusalem (Al Kuds) after the death of Solomon.

In *Ages in Chaos*, and in subsequent historical works, Velikovsky adhered to the conventional dating of Hebrew chronology and reduced the antiquity of Egyptian civilization by five centuries in order to correspond with it. In the present study we have found that Hebrew history itself is unnaturally lengthened and that it too needs to be brought forward in the historical time scale. Thus we claim that Saul did not found the Israelite United Kingdom circa 1020 BC, but around 720 BC. The synchronisms identified by Velikovsky in *Ages in Chaos* therefore belong not in the tenth and ninth centuries, as he believed, but in the seventh.

Velikovsky ended *Ages in Chaos* with the reign of Akhnaton, a pharaoh whom he identified as contemporary with Ahab of Israel and Shalmaneser III of Assyria. Using the measuring-rod of our revised chronology, we are compelled to place these kings near the end of the seventh century. In another volume dedicated to an examination of the Neo-Assyrian kingdom, I show how Shalmaneser III was the Assyrian title of a Median king who battled for years against a great king of Lydia, known to contemporary scholarship as Suppiluliumas the Hittite. There it is shown also how Tiglath-Pileser III, who brought a new age of power and prosperity to Assyria, is the Assyrian alter-ego of Cyrus the Persian conqueror of Babylon. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Tiglath-Pileser exacted tribute from Ahaz of Judah, an event normally dated to c. 735 BC. But Cyrus also extended his power towards the borders of Egypt, not in the eighth century, but in the decade 550-540 BC. The king Shalmaneser, who carried the Ten Tribes of Israel into captivity in the cities of the Medes, was actually Cambyses, Persian conqueror of Egypt. Sargon II, who usurped the Assyrian throne, was Darius the Great, who usurped the Achaemenid throne. The last years of the state of Judah correspond to the last years of the Achaemenid state. Thus Nebuchadrezzar, who carried off the people of Jerusalem to Babylon, was the Babylonized Artaxerxes III, who re-established Persian power in the west, whilst the pharaoh Necho, who was defeated by this latter-day Nebuchadrezzar, was actually Nectanebo III, who was defeated by Artaxerxes III.

Thus it was the Persians who destroyed the kingdom of Israel and enslaved the people of Judah, not the Assyrians and Babylonians. Why events of the Persian epoch should have been projected back into the Assyrian ep-

och of the eighth century is a complex issue, not to be explained in a few sentences.

However, it should be stated here and now that Rabbinical Jewish tradition is in total disagreement with conventional history as regards the antiquity of the Hebrew monarchies. Thus for example the second temple is said to have been erected sometime in the fourth century BC, rather than the latter sixth, where it has been placed by orthodox scholarship. The Old Testament is the repository *par excellence* of Jewish tradition, yet it has nothing whatsoever to say about the period between Ezra (mid fifth century) and the Maccabees (early second century). So, in an eventful period from where we should have expected a rich tradition to have survived, the Jews, most assiduous of record-keepers, are supposed to have left not a single sentence.

Nevertheless, the Jewish chroniclers were themselves very much confused by their past. They were not helped by the Achaemenid habit of aping the great kings of yesteryear — particularly those of Assyria and Babylonia. Nor were they assisted by the fact that the Macedonians, in their turn, imitated the Persians.

Thus the monarch who freed the two tribes of Judah from captivity was not Cyrus the Achaemenid by Alexander the Macedonian and his Seleucid successors. Alexander himself was confused with the founder of the Achaemenid Empire in the traditions of many of the Near Eastern peoples, and well before his death his court began to bear striking resemblance to that of the Persian Great Kings. Ultimately, it was this confusion of Macedonians with Achaemenids that added over two and a half centuries to the chronology of the Hebrew kings. The Macedonian Seleucids later became bitter enemies of the Jews, and the Maccabean War of the second century BC was among the most savage conflicts in the entire history of the Jewish people. The fact of the Jews and Seleucids becoming such bitter enemies may have had a bearing on how history was recorded. It is conceivable that the Jewish scribes only with great reluctance may have recalled that it was the ancestors of the Seleucids who had freed their own ancestors. In time, it was completely forgotten.

Thus it was that the monarchs who systematically demolished the states of Israel and Judah came to be viewed as the saviors of the Hebrews, whilst the kings who re-established the Jewish state were cast forever in the roles of villains and tyrants.

APPENDIX

The first chapter of the present volume examined, in a brief way, what might be described as the earliest event of human history. The catastrophe known to ancient tradition as the Flood or Deluge, represents the beginning of mankind's historical consciousness. This event may be viewed as a marker delimiting the boundary between prehistory and history and also, in a sense, between natural history and human history. For the Flood, which we have suggested occurred at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, coincides with the last great mass extinction. The men who lived before the catastrophe, the people of the Paleolithic (Old Stone) Age, were already fully modern human beings and appear to have been well on the way to establishing civilized and, perhaps in time, fully literate societies. As such, it seems appropriate to say a little more about both the cataclysm which ended their world and about the folk who witnessed it and told it in their legends and myths.

In addition, and whilst bearing in mind that this is a book about human history, it would be worthwhile, I feel, to take a brief look at some of the geological and paleontological evidence for this event, so momentous in all its effects. True, we have examined the stratigraphic evidence for the cataclysm in the Middle East, yet if, as we say, this was a world-wide calamity, its signature should be discernible throughout the entire globe. This in fact is the case, and the material relating to it is so extensive that many volumes could be filled were we to examine it properly. I feel that a comparatively

brief taster of this material, universally ignored in modern textbooks, should be provided here.

The pre-cataclysm people, it has become clear, already had a rudimentary knowledge of some metals, such as copper, and had, in some parts of the world, started along the path of pottery manufacture. This is demonstrated in the fact that the pre-Flood culture of Ur, known as 'Ubaid, produced a number of artifacts of copper as well as a distinctive design of decorated pottery. The pre-catastrophe 'Ubaid culture of Syria, which was contemporary with that of Mesopotamia (though dated over a thousand years later in the textbooks and there described as Early Bronze 2) also was acquainted with the rudiments of metallurgy and of pottery-manufacture.

We have stated that the 'Ubaid civilizations of Syria and Mesopotamia, together with the Early Badarian culture of Egypt, were contemporaneous with the culture that is, in Europe and North America, known as Upper or late Paleolithic. More specifically, the Early Badarians of Egypt appear to have been around precisely at the last two phases of the European Paleolithic, known as Solutrean and Magdalenian. This is confirmed by the striking similarities between the Magdalenian and Solutrean cultures on the one hand and the Early Badarian on the other, parallels remarked upon especially by Flinders Petrie but also by a number of other researchers.¹⁹⁶ And if we need further reminding of the advanced state already reached by these people, we need only point to the remarkable artwork of the Magdalenian culture in Europe. The cave-paintings left by the Magdalenian hunters are justly celebrated, as are the miniature carvings on bone and ivory which occasionally come to light.

The Paleolithic epoch was contemporary with what is, in terms of natural history, described as the Pleistocene. The Pleistocene age saw the last great mass animal extinction of history, and the people of the Paleolithic (and therefore also of the Early Badarian epoch of Egypt) lived alongside the mammoth, cave-bear, sabre-toothed tiger, woolly rhinoceros and other creatures commonly now described as belonging to the Ice Age. Yet none of these animals, which shared the earth with a great many species still alive, were

¹⁹⁶ See, e.g., M. C. Burkitt "Archeological Notes," *Man* Vol. 25 (Jan. 1926), p. 10; also E. W. Gardner and G. Caton-Thompson, "The Recent Geology and Neolithic Industry of the Northern Fayum Desert," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 56 (1926).

wiped out by ice or glaciers. Their destruction bears all the hallmarks of a sudden and violent end, and the catastrophe which closed the Pleistocene also terminated the Paleolithic, an epoch not far removed from our own.

In his seminal *Earth in Upheaval*, Immanuel Velikovsky looked at an enormous body of evidence, from every part of the globe, which strongly supported the above contention: that the Pleistocene extinctions occurred when men had already achieved a high level of culture, including the technology of pottery-making and an elementary understanding of metals and their uses. This was the case, for example, on the Atlantic coast of Florida, at Vero in the Indian River region, where, in 1915 and 1916, human remains were found in association with the bones of Pleistocene animals, some of which, like the saber-toothed tiger, became extinct, and others of which, like the camel, have disappeared from America.

The find, according to Velikovsky, “caused immediate excitement among geologists and anthropologists.”¹⁹⁷ This was due to the fact that along with the human bones “pottery was found, as well as bone implements and worked stone.”¹⁹⁸ According to Aleš Hrdlička, of the Smithsonian Institute, the “advanced state of culture, such as that shown by the pottery, bone implements, and worked stone brought from considerable distance, implies a numerous population spread over large areas, acquainted thoroughly with fire, with cooked food, and with all the usual primitive arts.” Hrdlička however held that the human remains could not be of an antiquity “comparable with that of fossil remains with which they are associated.”¹⁹⁹ But the human bones and artifacts were found among the extinct animals. E. H. Sellards, the discoverer of the deposits and a very capable anthropologist, wrote: “That the human bones and fossils normal to this stratum and contemporaneous with the associated vertebrates is determined by their place in the formation, their manner of occurrence, their intimate relation to the bones of other animals, and the degree of mineralization of the bones.” In his view the evidence “affords proof that man reached America at an early date and was present on the continent in association with a Pleistocene fauna.”²⁰⁰

197 Velikovsky, *Earth in Upheaval* p. 146.

198 Ibid.

199 Aleš Hrdlička, “Preliminary Report on Finds of Supposedly Ancient Human Remains at Vero, Florida,” *Journal of Geology*, XXV (1917).

200 E. H. Sellards, “On the Association of Human Remains and Extinct Vertebrates at Vero, Florida,” *Journal of Geology*, XXV (1917).

Yet the human artifacts at Vero were of a relatively advanced cultural stage. The art of the potter was practiced, and the work produced did not differ in any significant way from that of the mound-building cultures of Florida of the first millennium BC.²⁰¹

During the 1920s another such association of human remains and extinct animals was found. The discovery, at Melbourne, just to the north of Vero and still in the state of Florida, was of “a remarkably rich assemblage of animal bones, many of which represent species which became extinct at or after the close of the Pleistocene epoch.”²⁰² In the words of Velikovsky, the discovery “established unequivocally that in Melbourne — and in Vero — the human bones were of the same stratum and in the same state of fossilization as the bones of the extinct animals.”²⁰³ According to Velikovsky, “It follows that the extinct animals belonged to the recent past. It follows also that some paroxysm of nature heaped together these assemblages; the same paroxysm of nature may have destroyed numerous species so that they became extinct.”²⁰⁴

To these discoveries in Florida we must add, from several parts of the North American continent, artistic portrayals of Pleistocene creatures, in particular elephants of the mammoth and mastodon species. These representations have been found associated with remains that invariably look remarkably modern, and, although such artifacts continue to come to light, doubt has been cast on their authenticity or their interpretation. As recently as September 2007, Mark Holley, an underwater archeologist with the Grand Traverse Bay Underwater Preserve Council, announced the discovery of a remarkably well-preserved carving of a mammoth in the waters of Lake Michigan. Holley, who teaches at Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City, Michigan, describes the artifact as a granite boulder 3.5 to 4 feet high by 5 feet long, inscribed with markings that resemble a mastodon with a spear in its side. Confirmation that the markings are an ancient petroglyph will require more evidence. Nevertheless, the find seems likely to be genuine.²⁰⁵

201 *Earth in Upheaval* p. 146.

202 J. W. Gidly, “Ancient Man in Florida,” *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*, Vol. XL, (1929).

203 *Earth in Upheaval* p. 147.

204 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

205 Flesher, John. “Possible mastodon carving found on rock”, Associated Press, 2007-09-04. Retrieved on 2007-09-05.

As we have indicated, the geological and paleontological evidence for this paroxysm is very extensive and has already been covered in depth by a number of writers. Whilst Velikovsky stressed its recentness, others, who perhaps should know better, have gone more by conventional time scales in their dating. This was the position, for example, adopted by D. S. Allan and J. B. Delair in their *Cataclysm: Compelling Evidence of a Cosmic Catastrophe in 9500 BC* (1997), where, as the title suggests, they agreed that a natural catastrophe terminated the Paleolithic and wiped out the Pleistocene fauna, but they placed the event over eleven thousand years ago, in line with conventional thinking about the end of the Ice Age. Yet the evidence examined in the first chapter of the present volume strongly supports Velikovsky's contention, outlined at some length in *Earth in Upheaval* (1955), that the catastrophic termination of the Pleistocene occurred no more than 3,500 years ago.

In *Earth in Upheaval* Velikovsky noted the skeletons of a number of whales found in bog land of a post-Glacial date — i.e., very recent — in various parts of North America. These whales, it should be noted, were of a still-surviving species and were discovered at considerable elevations above sea-level and often very many miles distant from the ocean. Thus for example in Michigan, skeletons of two whales were found over 190 meters above the present sea-level whilst just to the north of Lake Ontario bones of a whale were found roughly 140 meters above present sea-level. Again, a skeleton of a whale was discovered in Vermont, over 160 meters above sea-level.²⁰⁶

There can be no doubt that these creatures were deposited where they were found by enormous tidal waves, yet it is equally certain that these waves were events of the recent past, for the bones were located in post-Glacial deposits.

Evidence of these vast waves is found in abundance across the globe, yet this material is now rarely, if ever, mentioned in official academic literature. In Antarctica, for example, the frozen bodies of whales, of species still living, are found sometimes hundreds of kilometers from the seashore and hundreds of meters above sea level. The bodies of these animals, often dismembered, as well as of seals and other marine life such as fish, are found perfectly preserved by the cold and often look as if they might have died only a year or two ago. Now, these animals cannot have been deposited where they are found by glaciers flowing from the ice cap since these flow downwards and outwards

206 Ibid., p. 43.

towards the sea. Neither can a sudden rise in the continental landmass of Antarctica be called upon as a solution, for such a rise would itself have been of cataclysmic proportions, involving immense seismic activity. And some of the animals are found frozen within an already existing ice cap, whilst others occur under the ice and in regions where no ice accumulates (owing to high velocity winds). For the whales to have found their way to such high altitudes without tidal waves, they would presumably have to have died of natural causes, their bodies then sinking to the sea bed and then being raised above sea level by earthquake activity. And during all this process, little or no decomposition had time to take place!

Yet for two reasons such a “solution” is utterly impossible. To begin with, the bodies of whales and other marine life do not, in any case, sink to the sea bed when they die. They float to the surface, where they are immediately consumed by scavengers and microscopic life. Secondly, a major upsurge of the Antarctic continent, as envisaged by the above hypothesis, is entirely absurd given the fact that the Antarctic landmass is actually *compressed* by the weight of thousands of meters of ice. Were this ice to be removed, the continent would presumably rise and achieve a far greater altitude than at present. In short, the growth of the ice cap on Antarctica saw the land *sink*, not rise.

Which leaves us with a single possible solution: The frozen creatures of Antarctica were placed there by tidal waves, tidal waves, of immense proportions. And, since all such creatures are of species still alive today, these waves must have washed the continent in very recent times.

The most striking, and perhaps most talked about, evidence for this recent cataclysm comes not from the Antarctic but from the Arctic, more specifically from the permafrost regions of Siberia and Alaska. The evidence from these areas was discussed in some detail in *Earth in Upheaval*, but, again, invariably ignored in modern textbooks.

In the Fairbanks district of Alaska, where the Tanana River joins the Yukon, gold is mined out of gravel and “muck”. This muck is a frozen mass of animals and trees. Velikovsky quotes F. Rainey, of the University of Alaska, where he describes the scene: “Wide cuts, often several miles in length and sometimes as much as 140 feet in depth, are now being sluiced out along stream valleys tributary to the Tanana in the Fairbanks District. In order to reach the gold-bearing gravel-beds an over-burden of frozen silt or ‘muck’ is

removed with hydraulic giants. This 'muck' contains enormous numbers of frozen bones of extinct animals such as mammoth, mastodon, super-bison and horse."²⁰⁷

It is freely admitted that these animals perished in comparatively recent times. Along with extinct species were found enormous quantities of animals of species still surviving. Mixed with the bodies of the animals, most of whom were dismembered and whose bones were smashed — although their flesh and skin are often well preserved — were found millions upon millions of uprooted and smashed trees, along with other types of debris, such as sand and gravel. The whole mass of animals, trees and gravel was found thoroughly mixed in a promiscuous mass, as though thrown together by some immense and virtually random force. According to F. C. Hibben of the University of New Mexico: "Although the formation of the deposits of muck is not clear, there is ample evidence that at least parts of this material were deposited under catastrophic conditions. Mammal remains are for the most part dismembered and disarticulated, even though some fragments yet retain, in their frozen state, portions of ligaments, skin, hair, and flesh. Twisted and torn trees are piled in splintered masses.... At least four considerable layers of volcanic ash may be traced in these deposits, although they are extremely warped and distorted...."²⁰⁸

It seems apparent that when these deposits were laid down, the area was subjected to repeated and violent volcanic activity; yet the scale and nature of the devastation goes well beyond anything attributable to volcanoes alone. Evidently great waves from the ocean had uprooted entire forests and lifted herds of animals, of every kind and variety, and thrown them together, twisted, smashed and dismembered, along with billions of tons of sand and gravel, into the polar regions.

In various levels of the icy muck, stone implements were found "frozen *in situ* at great depths and in apparent association" with the Ice Age fauna, implying that "men were contemporary with extinct animals in Alaska."²⁰⁹ In Velikovsky's words, "Worked flints, characteristically shaped, called Yuma points, were repeatedly found in the Alaskan muck, one hundred and more feet [about thirty meters] below the surface. One spear point was found there

207 F. Rainey, "Archeological Investigation in Central Alaska," *American Antiquity*, V (1940), 305.

208 F. C. Hibben, "Evidence of Early Man in Alaska," *American Antiquity*, VIII (1943), 256.

209 Rainey, *American Antiquity*, V, 307.

between a lion's jaw and a mammoth's tusk."²¹⁰ Yet similar weapons were used only a few generations ago by the Athapascan Indians, who camped in the Upper Tanana Valley.²¹¹ According to Hibben, "It has been suggested that even modern Eskimo points are remarkably Yuma-like," all of which, as Velikovsky noted, "indicates that the multitudes of torn animals and splintered forests date from a time not many thousand years ago."

Such discoveries recall the opinion of a number of American geologists in the latter part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries, among them George Frederick Wright (1838–1921), Newton Horace Winchell (1839–1914), and Warren Upham (1850–1934). Wright came to the conclusion that the Ice Age "did not close until about the time that the civilization of Egypt, Babylonia and Western Turkestan had attained a high degree of development," a view opposed to the "greatly exaggerated ideas of the antiquity of the glacial epoch."²¹²

The permafrost regions of the Russian north revealed a situation precisely paralleling that in Alaska. From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Russian explorers and trappers began to penetrate the frozen wastelands of Siberia, there came reports of elephants, of a type no longer in existence, found in great quantities in the icy ground. A lucrative trade in mammoth ivory quickly developed. By the middle of the nineteenth century so much of this material was reaching Europe that people began to talk about the "ivory mines" of the region, and soon Northern Siberia was to provide more than half the world's supply of the material.

One remarkable feature of these creatures was the state of preservation of the soft tissue. Flesh, skin and hair are often seen, and the flesh so well preserved by the cold that it can, on occasion, be safely eaten.

It soon became clear that many areas of the Russian east, but most especially north-eastern Siberia, held vast quantities of these creatures just beneath the surface. They are found, as a rule, in conditions very similar to those of the "muck" deposits in Alaska, where, as we saw, the bodies of mammoths are found intermingled with those of other species, both extinct and extant, mixed along with other kinds of debris, but most especially sand and gravel, as well as smashed and uprooted trees.

210 *Earth in Upheaval*, p. 5. Cf. Hibben, *American Antiquity*, VIII, 257.

211 *Ibid.* Cf. Rainey, *American Antiquity*, V, 301.

212 G. F. Wright, *The Ice Age in North America*, (1891) p. 683.

In the Arctic Ocean, just to the north of Siberia, lie various groups of islands. The earliest of these to be explored, the Liakhov Islands, were found to be absolutely packed with the bones of mammoths and other creatures. “Such was the enormous quantity of mammoths’ remains that it seemed ... that the island was actually composed of the bones and tusks of elephants, cemented together by icy sand.”²¹³ The New Siberian Islands, discovered in 1806 and 1806, present the same picture. “The soil of these desolate islands is absolutely packed full of the bones of elephants and rhinoceroses in astonishing numbers.”²¹⁴ Again, “These islands were full of mammoth bones, and the quantity of tusks and teeth of elephants and rhinoceroses, found in the nearby island of New Siberia, was perfectly amazing, and surpassed anything which had as yet been discovered.”²¹⁵

It would appear that these islands were formed, at least in part, by billions of tons of animal and vegetable matter, as well as sand and gravel, which was swept into the polar regions by enormous waves, waves which were, by the nineteenth century, termed “waves of translation”. These waves, it appears, were accompanied by a sudden and dramatic climate change. Temperatures dropped catastrophically. J. D. Dana, the leading American geologist of the second half of the nineteenth century, wrote: “The encasing in ice of huge elephants, and the perfect preservation of the flesh, shows that the cold finally became *suddenly* extreme, as of a single winter’s night, and knew no relenting afterward.”²¹⁶

It has often been emphasized, rightly, that the mammoth, as well as the woolly rhinoceros, so many of whose bodies are found in Siberia, are *not*, in spite of their hairy coats, creatures of the Arctic. Elephants in particular, whose daily calorie intake is enormous, could never survive on the sparse mosses and lichens which now cover the barren wastelands of northern Siberia. These were animals of the temperate zones, a fact confirmed by the contents of their mouths and stomachs. Here were found plants and grasses that do not now grow in northern Siberia. “The contents of the stomachs have been carefully examined; they showed the undigested food, leaves of trees now found in Southern Siberia, but a long way from the existing de-

213 D. Garth Whitley, “The Ivory Islands of the Arctic Ocean,” *Journal of the Philosophical Society of Great Britain*, XII (1910), 35.

214 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

215 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

216 J. D. Dana, *Manual of Geology* (4th ed., 1894), p. 1007.

posits of ivory. Microscopic examination of the skin showed red blood corpuscles, which was proof not only of a sudden death, but that the death was due to suffocation either by gases or water, evidently the latter in this case. But the puzzle remained to account for the sudden freezing up of this large mass of flesh so as to preserve it for future ages.”²¹⁷

On the islands of the Arctic Ocean, “neither trees, nor shrubs, no bushes, exist ... and yet the bones of elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, and horses are found in this icy wilderness in numbers which defy all calculation.”²¹⁸ Clearly, either the climate of the region was much warmer when the above creatures lived or they were swept into these latitudes by some titanic force, almost certainly tidal waves. Or, alternatively, both these options might be correct. The cataclysm which threw together the animals and extinguished their lives also changed the climate suddenly and dramatically — a freezing so rapid that flesh and hair was preserved intact.

The contents of the mammoths’ mouths and stomachs revealed another astonishing fact. Some had been eating, as well as grass and other herbs, flowering plants, such as buttercups *in full bloom*. The comments of American zoologist Ivan T. Sanderson say it all:

... not one trace of pine needles or of the leaves of any other trees were in the stomach of the Berezovka mammoth; little flowering buttercups, tender sedges and grasses were found exclusively. Buttercups will not even grow at forty degrees (4.4°C), and they cannot flower in the absence of sunlight. A detailed analysis of the contents of the Berezovka mammoth’s stomach brought to light a long list of plants, some of which still grow in the arctic, but are actually much more typical of Southern Siberia today. Therefore, the mammoths either made annual migrations north for the short summer, or the part of the earth where their corpses are found today was somewhere else in warmer latitudes at the time of their death, or both.²¹⁹

The circumstances surrounding the deaths of these creatures constitute, in Sanderson’s testimony, a profound mystery:

Here is a really shocking — to our previous way of thinking — picture. Vast herds of enormous, well-fed beasts not especially designed for extreme cold, placidly feeding in sunny pastures, delicately plucking flowering buttercups at a temperature in which we would probably not even have needed a coat. Suddenly they were all killed without any visible sign of violence and before they could so much as swallow a last mouthful of food, and then were quick-frozen so rapidly that every cell of their bodies

217 Whitley, *Journal of the Philosophical Society of Great Britain*, XII (1910), 56.

218 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

219 Ivan T. Sanderson, “Riddle of the Frozen Giants,” *Saturday Evening Post*, No. 39, January, 1960.

is perfectly preserved, despite their great bulk and their high temperature. What, we may well ask, could possibly do this?

What indeed.

One notable aspect of the cataclysm which terminated the Pleistocene, and which was stressed by Velikovsky, was the universal signature left by giant tectonic disturbances. Everywhere, even in areas of the planet now tectonically inactive, vast earthquakes erupted. In some places, it seems, mountain-ranges rose overnight to prodigious heights. In others, the land sank, consigning whole regions into the depths of the sea. During these events, rivers changed their courses and lakes overflowed. In some places, earth movements dammed rivers, forming new lakes. Velikovsky stressed that in many localities, geologists found to their astonishment that lakes, river-valleys, deltas and cataracts were often no more than three to four thousand years old. Often it was possible to be much more precise, and it was discovered that a great many of these features were between 3,000 and 3,500 years old.

Such was the case, for example, with a number of inland lakes with no outward flow, whose salt and chlorine content could be compared with the salt and chlorine of the feeder rivers. Two of these, Abert and Summer lakes in southern Oregon, are regarded as remnants of a once large glacial lake, Chewaucan. W. Van Winkle of the United States Geological Survey examined the saline content of these two lakes and wrote: "A conservative estimate of the age of Summer and Abert Lakes, based on their concentration and area, the composition of the influent waters, and the rate of evaporation, is 4,000 years."²²⁰ Velikovsky comments that van Winkle, "startled by his own result ... conjectured that salt deposits of the early Chewaucan Lake may be hidden beneath the bottom sediments of the present Abert and Summer lakes."²²¹

Yet the same astonishingly recent result was obtained for lake after lake. Thus for example Owens Lake in California, which lies to the east of Sequoia National Park, was examined by H. S. Gale with the object of determining its content of chlorine and sodium. These were compared to the chlorine and sodium of the feeder river, and the conclusion reached was that the river required 4,200 years to supply the chlorine and 3,500 to supply the sodium.²²²

²²⁰ Walton van Winkle, "Quality of the Surface Waters of Oregon," US Geological Survey, Water Supply Paper 363 (Washington, 1914). Quoted from *Earth in Upheaval* p. 148.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid., pp. 148-9.

A prehistoric basin in Nevada, named Lake Lahontan, which previously covered an area of 8,500 square miles, was also investigated. As its water level fell, the ancient lake split up into a number of lakes divided by a desert terrain. In the 1880s Lake Lahontan and its basin was examined by I. Russell of the United States Geological Survey, and it was established that the lake never completely dried out and the present-day Pyramid and Winnemucca lakes north of Reno and the Walker Lake south-west of it are the remnants of the older and larger lake. Russell concluded that Lake Lahontan existed during the Ice Age and was contemporaneous with the different stages of glaciation of the epoch. He also discovered the bones of various Pleistocene animals in the deposits of the ancient lake. In more recent times, Lake Lahontan was explored anew by J. Claude Jones, and the results of this investigation were published as "Geological History of Lake Lahontan" by the Carnegie Institution in Washington. Jones investigated the saline content of Pyramid and Winnemucca lakes and of the Truckee River that feed them. He discovered that the river could have supplied the entire content of chlorine of these two lakes in 3,881 years. "A similar calculation," he wrote, "using sodium instead of chlorine, gave 2,447 years necessary." Jones' work led him to agree with Russell that Lake Lahontan never fully dried up and that the existing Pyramid and Winnemucca lakes are its residuals.

Yet, as Velikovsky commented, "these conclusions require that the age of the mammals of the Ice Age, found in the deposits of Lake Lahontan, be not greater than that of the lake. This means that the Ice Age ended only twenty-five to thirty-nine centuries ago."²²³

The formation of these lakes was associated with the event which brought to an end the Pleistocene, for many of the creatures of that epoch were found in the Lahontan sediments. These included bones of horses, elephants and camels. There was also a spear point of human manufacture.²²⁴ Velikovsky notes that when a branch of the Southern Pacific Railroad was laid through Astor Pass, a large gravel pit of Lahontan age was opened. J. C. Merriam of the University of California identified there the bones of many species of extinct animals, among them the skeletal remains of *Felix atrox*, a species of lion found also in the asphalt pit of Rancho la Brea, as well as a species

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²²⁴ I. Russell, "Geologic History of Lake Lahontan," U.S. Geological Survey, Monograph II, p. 143.

of horse and a camel, also found at la Brea.²²⁵ In Jones's words: "All of these forms are now extinct and neither camels nor lions are found on this continent as a part of the native fauna."²²⁶ According to Velikovsky, "the similarity of the fauna of the asphalt pits of La Brea and the deposits of Lake Lahontan led Merriam to decide that they were contemporaneous," and, "On the basis of his analysis Jones came to the conclusion that the extinct animals lived in North America into historical times." This, of course, was an unusual and controversial statement, and it was opposed at first on the ground that his interpretation of his observations was "obviously erroneous, since [it] led him to the conclusion that the mastodon and the camel lived in North America into historical times."²²⁷ Yet, as Velikovsky points out, this was "an argument of a preconceived nature, not based on the findings of field geology."

River systems, as well as lakes, leave their own signatures on the landscape. As with lakes, earthquake and other seismic activity has a great impact upon rivers. Old water-courses are dammed and form lakes; others are diverted into new channels. Sometimes these channels take the river far from its prior course. If what Velikovsky claimed is true, if mountain ranges were raised hundreds and even thousands of meters only three thousand years ago, then we must expect that many river systems are entirely new. Or rather that they are but three millennia old.

And this is exactly what we do find.

As Velikovsky noted in *Earth in Upheaval*, when Charles Lyell visited the United States, he was told by a resident of the Niagara Falls region that the cataract retreats about three feet per year. Taking the rather superior attitude that the natives of a country are likely to exaggerate, Lyell announced that one foot per annum would be a more likely estimate. From this he concluded that the St. Lawrence River would have needed over thirty-five thousand years, from the time the land was freed from the ice cover and the water started its work of erosion, to cut the gorge from Queenston to the place it occupied in the year of Lyell's visit. Since then this span has often been mentioned in textbooks as the length of time from the end of the glacial period.

Yet subsequent research proved that the local interviewed by Lyell had not exaggerated, but had under-estimated the rate of erosion. Records were to show that since 1764 the falls had retreated from Lake Ontario towards

225 J. C. Merriam, *California University Bulletin*, Department of Geology, VIII (1915), 377-384.

226 J. Claude Jones, in *Quaternary Climates*, (Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1925) pp.49-50.

227 C. E. P. Brooks, *Climate through the Ages* (2nd ed, 1940), p. 346.

Lake Erie at the rate of five feet per year. If the process of wearing down the rock had gone on at this rate from the time of the disappearance of the ice cover, seven thousand years would have been sufficient to do the work. However, if in the beginning, when the ice first melted, the river system was swollen with extra water and detritus, the erosion rate must have been much more rapid, and the age of the gorge must therefore be reduced further. According to G. F. Wright, author of *The Ice Age in North America*, five thousand years may be regarded as adequate.²²⁸

But even this figure, it seems, needs to come down, for it was subsequently discovered that a large part of the falls predated the Ice Age. In the 1920s borings made for a railway bridge showed that the middle part of Whirlpool Rapids Gorge contained a thick deposit of glacial boulder clay, indicating that it had been excavated once, had filled with drift, and then been partly re-excavated in post-glacial times. According to R. F. Flint of Yale, Upper Great Gorge, the uppermost segment of the whole gorge, appears to be the only part that is genuinely post-glacial. Yet this poses a great problem. Here, the present rate of recession is 3.8 feet per year, and “Hence the age of the Upper Great Gorge is calculated as somewhat more than four thousand years — and to obtain even this [high] figure we have to assume that the rate of recession has been constant, although we know that discharge has in fact varied greatly during post-glacial times.”²²⁹ Velikovsky comments, “If due allowance is made for this last factor, the age of the Upper Great Gorge of Niagara Falls would be somewhere between 2,500 and 3,500 years. It follows that the ice retreated in historical times, somewhere between the years 1,500 and 500 before the present era.”²³⁰

Numerous river-systems throughout the world are likewise shown to have begun flowing in their present courses only three to three and half thousand years ago.

A point stressed by Velikovsky was that what we now call the Ice Age was a much shorter period of time (or rather periods of time) than is now believed and that the episodic lowering of the earth’s temperature was the direct result of the cosmic upheavals described in ancient literature. Essentially, as the earth found itself in close contact with extra-terrestrial bodies, the tectonic plates went into upheaval and volcanoes everywhere erupted,

228 Cited from Velikovsky *Earth in Upheaval*, p. 141.

229 Richard F. Flint, *Glacial Geology and the Pleistocene Epoch*, (New York, 1947) p. 382.

230 *Earth in Upheaval*, p. 142.

unleashing huge amounts of dust and ash into the atmosphere. With the sun effectively blotted out, a dramatic lowering of the planet's temperature followed. Glaciers expanded and ice sheets moved south. Yet within a few years, less perhaps than a single decade, most of the volcanic dust had settled and the environment began to warm, to emerge from the Ice Age. All over the world glaciers began a long process of retreat, and this shrinking has continued till the present day. Historical records show that all glaciers have been shrinking at least since classical times, and a good deal of research has gone into calculating the rate of shrinkage, plus the length of time taken for each glacier to have reached its present size. Following on from Velikovsky's thesis that a final series of cosmic catastrophes occurred as recently as the eighth century BC, we might expect many glaciers to have been shrinking steadily since that time. Indeed, knowing the rate at which each glacier retreats, we might expect to identify exactly when it formed, and this should, if Velikovsky is right, have been about three thousand years ago.

What then do the glaciers tell us?

The answer is simple: throughout the world, many or most of the glaciers, judging by their rates of retreat, must have formed about three thousand years ago.

A detailed study of the Rhone glacier was carried out early in the twentieth century by Frenchman A. Cochon de Lapparent. As was evident from the location of terminal moraines, at the time of its greatest expansion the Rhone Glacier reached from Valais to Lyons. By comparing the average figure of progression as seen today on larger glaciers, De Lapparent came to the conclusion that the Rhone Glacier would have needed only 2,475 years to form. Then, comparing the terminal moraines of several present-day glaciers with the moraines left by the Rhone Glacier at its maximum expansion, De Lapparent arrived at a figure of about 2,400 years. In short, from the time of its formation, little more than 4,800 years had passed. Yet if the glacier was formed in the wake of a catastrophe which caused a rapid fall in the earth's temperature, as Velikovsky's hypothesis presupposes, then that figure would need to be reduced substantially.

But even De Lapparent's estimate caused disquiet. He was criticized, in particular, by Albrecht Penck.²³¹ Yet "His objection was based not on a disapproval of ... [De Lapparent's] figures, but on a claim that great evolutionary

231 A. Penck, "Das Alter des Menschengeschlechts," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, XL (1908), 390ff.

changes took place during the consecutive interglacial periods. The divergence of opinion between them was so great that hundreds of thousands of years in Penck's scheme were reduced to mere thousands of years in De Lapparent's calculations. Penck estimated the duration of the Ice Age, with its four glacial and three interglacial periods, as one million years. Each of the four glaciations and deglaciations must have consumed one hundred thousand years and more. The argument for his estimate is this: How much time was necessary to produce the changes in nature, if no catastrophes intervened? And how long would it take to produce changes in animals by means of a process that in our own day is so slow as to be almost imperceptible?"

More recent field work in the Alps fully confirmed De Lapparent's findings. Numerous glaciers were found to be no older than 4,000 years, a startling discovery that made the following statement necessary: "A large number of the present glaciers of the Alps are not survivors of the last glacial maximum, as was formerly universally believed, but are glaciers newly created within roughly the last 4,000 years."²³²

And we could go on. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, it would be possible to fill many volumes with the evidence available. The fact that this evidence is rarely if ever treated in modern textbooks, particularly in books aimed at the general public, should not delude one into believing it does not exist. On the contrary, the amount of material just keeps growing. It is excluded from the popular accounts because it disagrees so radically with the prevailing hypothesis, a hypothesis predicated on the Darwinian and Lyellist notion that vast eons were necessary to both produce new species and make extinct old ones. Yet these eons, it appears, never existed. The last great mass extinction, accompanied by an enormous world-wide upheaval of nature, occurred no more than three to three and a half thousand years ago. This event was witnessed by human beings, human beings who, in many parts of the world, had already attained a high level of culture and were on the way to producing civilized societies. The cataclysm, when it came, had a major impact human culture and on the shape taken by the rising civilizations.

²³² Flint, *Glacial Geology*, p. 491.

Appendix

Conventional Chronology		
Year BC	EGYPT	ISRAEL
3000	First Dynasty civilization established mainly by immigrants from Mesopotamia. Epoch is associated with phallus worship and circumcision.	
	Great seer Imhotep, who is High Priest of Heliopolis, solves crisis of seven-year famine by interpreting pharaoh Djoser's dream.	
2500	Collapse of Egyptian civilization during a catastrophe which darkens the sun and sees "fire throughout the land".	
2000		Abraham tribe arrives in Egypt and teaches Egyptians rudiments of civilization.
		Great seer Joseph, who is High Priest of Heliopolis, solves crisis of seven-year famine by interpreting pharaoh's dream.
1500		Collapse of Egyptian civilization in a catastrophe that darkens the sun and allows the Israelite slaves to escape.

Revised Chronology		
Year BC	EGYPT	ISRAEL
	Chalcolithic (Naqada I)	Chalcolithic
NATURAL CATASTROPHE		
	First Dynasty established by immigrants from Mesopotamia. Worship of phallic god Min and custom of circumcision.	"Abraham" tribes from Mesopotamia bring high civilization to Egypt. Phallus worship and circumcision.
1000	Imhotep solves famine-crisis after interpreting pharaoh Djoser's dream.	Joseph solves famine-crisis after interpreting pharaoh's dream.
NATURAL CATASTROPHE		
	In wake of disaster Sneferu defeats invading desert tribes and launches Pyramid Age	Moses leads Israelites out of Egypt and across the desert of Midian, where they fight migrating desert tribes.
770	About 70 years after Sneferu, Egypt is invaded by the "Old" Assyrians under Sargon I, who establishes Sixth (or Hyksos) Dynasty.	After death of Joshua, Israelites are defeated by Assyrian king Cusham Risathaim (Sargon I).
710	After about 60 years, Sixth or Hyksos Dynasty is defeated and expelled from Egypt by Theban (Eighteenth Dynasty) rulers.	Saul becomes first ruler of Israelite kingdom.

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