Stories and Stones
Archaeology and the Bible, an introduction
with CD Rom

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“Poetry is not the rhyme. It is the heart speaking in the gaps and darkness and quiet and from lonely things that talk.” Morten E. Fadum

Fortress Press
Introducing DCB

Two events in my early life contributed to my love for anthropology and archaeology. I was an army brat, and I read every issue of National Geographic that came into my home.

I was born in Louisiana, and before I left high school I had lived in Florida, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Japan, New Jersey, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, California and Massachusetts. I went to seven schools in twelve years.

My family’s itinerant lifestyle taught me just how different people are, and how differently they live. I was a social scientist in training. If I was going to survive, I needed to pay attention to the people around me in each place, so that I could understand how to do what they did, and to appreciate why they did what they did. To understand others is an intellectual activity. To appreciate others is an emotional activity. I not only wanted to know what was going on, I also wanted to feel how those around me felt about what they did.

Accent is a good example. Before my father was transferred to Georgia, I went to kindergarten in New Jersey. I am sure that my accent was vintage New Jersey. In Georgia I had to ride a city bus to school. A couple stops after I got on the bus a group of Southern high school girls would get on the bus. They knew I was an outsider. For weeks they tormented me: “Come on, Yankee boy, talk!” For weeks I clutched my Lone Ranger lunch box and said nothing, but I listened carefully to how they sounded.

Eventually I was ready. The girls boarded. They started. I looked up at them and cooed with all the grits I could find in my first-grade voice: “Y’all hush!” They never bothered me again. I had paid attention to the people around me, and learned how to sound like they sounded.
National Geographic was my window on the world. The pictures were stunning. They made me want to grow up and travel to far away places and to live with exotic people. I wanted to be like the anthropologists or archaeologists in National Geographic. I wanted to introduce the people of one time and place to the people of another.

When I finished college, however, I did not become an anthropologist or an archeologist. I became a biblical scholar. I traveled to far away places and lived with exotic people, but only through the words of the laws and stories in the Bible. Yet the way I was taught to study texts would eventually lead me back to anthropology and archaeology.

In graduate school I studied the Bible using what biblical scholars call “form criticism” and anthropologists call “folklore studies”. Form criticism developed in Europe. The work of Axel Olrik (1864-1917) on The Heroic Legends of Denmark (1919) was particularly influential in developing the method of folklore studies, and consequently of biblical form criticism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars such as Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) were learning how to use the folklore studies of Olrik and other anthropologists to better understand the biblical traditions in Genesis and Psalms, for example.

Form criticism studies three aspects of a biblical tradition: form, setting and intention. “Form” is the basic genre from which biblical traditions develop. “Setting” is the social institution (German: Sitz im Leben) where the genre develops. “Intention” is the purpose for which the genre was used. Until the last twenty or twenty-five years of the twentieth century biblical form critics concentrated on the form and the intention of biblical traditions. They identified stories like creation stories, ancestor stories, hero stories and parable stories. And they identified laws like case law, apodictic law, covenant law, trials and appeals. They also determined that the intention of creation stories, for example, was to describe how the powerful expected a culture to work. Similarly, the intention of laws was to solve problems when a particular part of a culture did not work properly. Form critics did not pay much attention to the settings – the social institutions where these biblical traditions developed. A regular answer to the question: “Where did this biblical tradition develop?” was liturgy.

Near the end of my work on my Ph.D. dissertation I happened to read: “The Understanding of “Sitz im Leben” in Form Criticism” by Douglas Knight. Knight asked a series of provocative questions.

- “What do we mean by ‘liturgy’ in the world of the Bible?”
- “Is liturgy drafted by a committee in ancient Israel working like the committee that drafted the Book of Common Prayer in 1928 for the Episcopal Church?”
- “Is ‘liturgy’ something that classroom parents create for the celebration of mothers’ day?”
- “Is ‘liturgy’ something created by the Library of Congress deciding what authors to feature in an exhibit on colonial Virginia?”

Liturgy in the world of the Bible, and liturgy in the worlds of Judaism, Christianity and Islam today are not the same. In fact the world where the Bible developed was very different from worlds of Judaism, Christianity and Islam today. Therefore, it is impossible to understand
the Bible without first understanding the world of the Bible because the meaning of any tradition is determined by the social institution where that tradition developed. To understand the Bible it is essential to use anthropology and archaeology to understand the worlds where that Bible developed.

Biblical scholars who reconstruct the worlds of the Bible in order to better understand the Bible itself are called: “social scientific critics.” To reconstruct the worlds of the Bible social scientific criticism uses sociology, anthropology, ethnography and archaeology. Sometimes social scientific critics study the big picture sometimes they study the little picture.

- How do theories of state formation influence the interpretation of the Stories of Saul, the Stories of Jonathan and the Stories of David in the Bible?
- How does the lack of a destruction layer during the Late Bronze period at Jericho influence the Stories of Joshua?
- How does architectural style of the pillared house in Syria-Palestine influence the interpretation of household laws in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers?
- How do reconstructions of institutions like purity-impurity regulations…
- Kinship patterns…
- Prophecy…
- Tribes ruled by chiefs…
Introducing Stories and Stones

Morten E. Fadum is an artist, and a poet. I first met his work in the Luna Gallery at the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs CO. I later met him at an art festival in Carefree AZ. One of his small collages hangs on the wall above my desk. His first slim volume of poems: Even Poets Dance is on my shelf. Our extended family has received his art as gifts from us to mark the passages in their lives.

The art and poetry of Morten Fadum inspired me how to understand my work. He writes: “Poetry is not the rhyme. It is the heart speaking in the gaps and darkness and quiet and from lonely things that talk.” Listening to stories and stones, like listening to poetry, is learning to listen to silence as well as to sound. Silence is as important, and perhaps more important, than sound for understanding and for appreciating stories and stones. They are lonely things that talk in gaps and darkness and quiet. The strange poetry of stories and stones fascinates archaeologists and biblical critics, who learn to listen to them and to speak for them. Stories and Stones: introducing archaeology and the Bible is an introduction to what they are hearing, what they are learning, and what a difference it makes for those of us for whom the Bible and its social world are not just a passing fancy, but a way of life.

History of Ancient Israel

From 1950-1970 studies like Archaeology of Palestine (1949) by William F. Albright, Archeology in the Holy Land (1960) by Kathleen Kenyon and A History of Israel by John Bright (1959-1981) used archaeology to demonstrate the historical accuracy of the Bible. Archaeology could not prove Israel’s faith, but archaeology could demonstrate that Israel’s faith developed from archaeologically verifiable historical events. These were political histories of ancient Israel. These histories accept the biblical traditions as reliable reflections of past events and their relationships with one another. (Alhstrom 1994:10)


Books on archaeology and the Bible published after 1990, like Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 B.C.E. (1990) by Amihai Mazar, The Archaeology of Ancient Israel (1992) edited by Amnon Ben-Tor, and The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land (1995) by Thomas E. Levy, use archaeology to recreate the world of the Bible in order to better understand its traditions. Here, archaeology does not merely verify and illuminate historical events found in the Bible. These studies use anthropology, sociology and archaeology to reconstruct the social world of ancient Israel.
Keith W. Whitlam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: the silence of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge, 1996) argues that histories of Israel are not critical, academic works but simply summaries of the Bible and reflections of the personal prejudices or commitments of historians today. These histories are artificial reconstructions of worlds that the Bible and historians today wish had existed, but, in fact, never did. Whitlam’s challenge was unconditional and definitive, but it did not convince scholars to try writing histories of ancient Israel. Iain Provan, V. Philips Long and Tremper Longman III offer a detailed response to Whitlam’s challenge and counter with their own *Biblical History of Israel* (2003).

**Social World of Ancient Israel**

The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 BCE. by Norman K. Gottwald (1979)

Another study of the social world of the Bible is *Life in Biblical Israel* by Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager (2001). *Life in Biblical Israel* is a well-organized and well-written handbook to the social world of ancient Israel. There are more than 200 high quality color and black and white illustrations, photographs, maps, architectural plans, and site reconstructions.

*Stories in Stone: the Bible in Archaeology* does not reconstruct the historical periods of Syria-Palestine. It simply seeks to listen to the artifactual record to better understand the artistic depth of the biblical tradition.


John C. H. Laughlin is professor of Religion and Chair of the Department of Religion at Averett University, a private, co-educational institution affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. He has excavated at Tel Dan, Capernaum and Banias. Archaeology and the Bible (Routledge 2000) is “…concerned with field archaeology as it is practiced in the Near East …and its implications for reading and understanding the Bible.” (Laughlin 2000:1) The book offers a history of archaeology and an introduction to field work. Laughlin then surveys what archaeologists have learned about the cultures of the Neolithic period (8500-2000 B.C.E.), the Middle Bronze period (2000-1550 B.C.E.), the Late Bronze period (1550-1200 B.C.E.), the Iron I period (1200-1000 B.C.E.) and Iron II period (1000-550 B.C.E.), and, especially, how the understanding of these cultures has changed during the 20th century. Laughlin has written a good first book to familiarize students with vocabulary, basic concepts and significant events, promising “…to interrelate the data now known through archaeological discovery with the world and text of the Hebrew Bible…..” (Laughlin 2000:2), Laughlin takes inventory of the talking points that have developed between archaeologists and biblical scholars.

*Stories in Stone: the Bible in Archaeology* (an introduction with CD Rom) builds a relationship between the people of one time and place to the people of another by studying the Bible alongside the stories that the architecture, pottery, metalwork, sculpture, tombs painting and other arts from the world of the Bible have to tell. Studying traditions and tells together offers an understanding and an appreciation of how ancient Near Eastern cultures probed
questions of human life and values and how these cultures affect the questions over time. Archaeology does not prove the Bible, but archaeology does help reconstruct the social worlds of the ancient peoples whose traditions are the legacy of the Bible.

Until the 18th century, scholars used the Bible as a primary historical source for understanding the social and spiritual worlds of ancient Israel. During the 18-19th centuries, scholars tested this hypothesis of the Bible as history and concluded that the Bible was history. Until 1950, large scale excavations were conducted by archaeologists to create a reliable history of the Bible. Between 1950 and 1970, biblical archaeology was convinced that the Bible accurately reflected the material world where it developed.

After 1970, however, more and more full-time, professional, Syro-Palestinian archaeologists, who were not biblical scholars, raised more and more questions demonstrating a discontinuity between the world in the Bible and the world of the Bible. Consequently, archaeologists of the lands of the Bible and biblical scholars parted from their shared goals. They spent less and less time communicating with each other, which fosters the perception that the related fields of material culture and the biblical tradition have very little to contribute to each other. Even when the conversations take place, the two groups often find themselves speaking different languages.

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Stories in Stone: the Bible in Archaeology (an introduction with CD Rom) integrates several governing assumptions developed by archaeology. For example, the book assumes that the Hebrews were insiders, not outsiders. They were farmers and herders, not warriors. They were a remnant people driven by hunger and by war into the hills from the Late Bronze Age cities along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They migrated east, not west.
Consequently, the culture of ancient Israel was virtually identical to the culture of the other people indigenous to Syria-Palestine.

Ancient Israel stands alongside, and not against, the material culture of its neighbors. The Hebrews learned from them. For example, peoples along the Euphrates and the Tigris honed their skills in conflict resolution in pioneering works like Code of Ur-Nammu (2112-2095 BCE) and the Code of Hammurabi (1792-1750 BE). The Hebrews reflect the same commitment to due process in the Covenant Code, the Holiness Code and the Deuteronomic Code. The Hittites were masters of covenant, a strategy for preventing war and negotiating peace. The Hebrews used covenant as a model to understand their relationship with Yahweh. The Egyptians were state builders. After 1000 B.C.E. the Hebrews united their villages into a centralized state, identical, in many ways, to the state of Egypt.

Museum catalog

Like SWAI interprets a full text

Any of the following might be willing to peer-review and vet Stories and Stones.

- Diana Edelman (University of Sheffield, Tel Rehov)
- Doug Clark (Walla Walla University and ASOR)
- Max Miller (Fernbank Museum of Natural History, 767 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta)
- Ziony Zevit (University of Judaism)
- Beth Nikai (University of Arizona)
- Phil King (Boston College)
- K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Trinity International University Divinity School, Illinois)
- Elizabeth Bloch-Smith (Ph.D. University of Chicago)

I would like the physical shape of the book to be the same size as B.S. J. Isserlin, The Israelites (2001). The pages are seven inches wide and ten inches high. The size is nice. However the pages are already coming loose from the binding of my copy.

The line drawings and maps are b/w and are crisp. The photo sections are all b/w and well reproduced, but the selection is a little eccentric. Neil Elliott at Fortress and I decided that the outline should be archaeology and not the canon, so what I am proposing here following the archaeological calendar, but tries to integrate selections from across the canon.

At this point I am going to follow the format we used in Social World in the chapters – a reconstruction, for example, of the Neolithic Cultures, and then demonstrate how that enriches the understanding of a particular biblical tradition. Most of the existing books do not do full text. They simply refer to verses. My model are museum exhibition catalogues that provide introductory essays, and then show you the artistic pieces.

Doug Clark at ASOR really encouraged me to write day-in-the-life pieces that he said students enjoyed. Both Borowski and King/Stager have chapters. I am having my students do a day-in-
the-life pieces for assignments. I am now sure where I want to go with them in Stories and Stones.

In looking at other tables of contents I am currently thinking of using questions like: “How does knowing something about the geography of Syria-Palestine contribute to the understanding of …” “How does knowing something about the pillared house contribute to the understanding of the Stories of Elijah?” etc. There are both accidental and essential contributions to interpretations. On the one hand knowing that only slaves go barefoot in the world of the Bible would be an accidental contribution to the understanding of the Story of How Deborah delivered Israel from Hazor”. You would not need to know anything about sandals or barefeet to know that Sisera starts off powerful, and ends up powerless. On the other hand knowing how hospitality works in the world of the Bible makes an essential contribution to the understanding of the Story of How Jael delivered Israel for Sisera. If you don’t understand hospitality Jael looks like a black widow female character who mates and then murders her lover.

Stories in Stone: the Bible in Archaeology (an introduction with CD Rom) is proposed to be a book of some 450 pages. Line drawings and maps will appear in the printed book. Color photographs and power-point presentations will be provided online at www.doncbenjamin.com An editable text, student aids like reading lists, discussion questions, and project guidelines will be provided on a CD Rom, which also leaves good space for content in the printed book, and creates a book which is friendly to general audiences. A completion date of December 2006 for the manuscript has been set.

Further Reading

Adler, Joshua J. "Archaeology and the Bible." Jewish Bible Quarterly. 28 No 1 Ja Mr 2000, P 45 51. (n.d.).


- *Benchmarks in Time and Culture: An Introduction to Palestine Archaeology Dedicated to*


Links

Ancient Near East
http://www.cyberpursuits.com/archeo/ne-arch.asp
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Getting Started

0. Introducing DCB

Who am I? I am an army brat, and, as a kid, I read every issue of National Geographic that came into my home. I was born in Louisiana, and before I left high school I had lived in Florida, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Japan, New Jersey, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, California and Massachusetts. I went to seven schools in twelve years. My family’s itinerant lifestyle taught me just how different people are, and how differently they live. I was a social scientist in training. If I was going to survive, I needed to pay attention to the people around me in each place, so that I could understand how to do what they did, and to appreciate why they did what they did.

1. Introducing Stories and Stones

Biblical archaeology is technically a more accurate label for the study of Archaeology and the Bible than the archaeology of Syria-Palestine, Near Eastern archaeology or archaeology of the land of the Bible. The archaeology of Syria-Palestine studies human cultures from Palaeolithic flint tools to Ottoman hunting lodges. The focus of biblical archaeology is on the time and place, the physical remains and written document that relate to the Bible either as backfound nd context or by more direct contact.

Nonetheless, biblical archaeology is going through some turbulent developments. One took place after William G. Dever (University of Arizona) initiated a debate about biblical scholars with religious agendas, who were not trained field archaeologists. Positively the debate produced greater precision in the field, and greater caution in linking artifacts with the Bible in classrooms. Negatively, the status of biblical archaeology as a legitimate discipline was seriously questioned. In 1999 the American Schools of Oriental Research changed the name of its journal Biblical Archaeologist to Near Eastern Archaeology.

Another development was a debate initiated by Niels P. Lemche (University of Copenhagen), Thomas Thompson (University of Copenhagen), Philip Davies (University of Sheffield), Keith Whitelam (University of Sheffield) and Israel Finkelstein (Tel Aviv University), often called “historical minimalists” by their opponents. They argue that, after more than a century, biblical archaeology has failed to produce incontrovertible evidence for an historical Israel in the Bible. Using postmodern literary methods, they have suggested that the Bible, in fact, represents only an attempt by the Judaism of the Hellenistic period to avoid assimilation. The result has been skepticism towards biblical archaeology and the historical reliability of the Bible.

Stories and Stones is a book for general readers, for adult learners and for students in lower divisions courses in religious studies, who -- in the heat of the debates about biblical archaeology and minimalist-maximalist history -- do not want to lose sight of all that has been learned about the world of the Bible from archaeology, and just how much archaeology during the 20th century has enriched the understanding and the appreciation of the Bible. Its competitors are Life in Biblical Israel (2001) by Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager and Daily Life in Biblical Times (2003) by Oden Borowski.

Stories and Stones is a book the lives of Everyman and Everywoman in the world of the Bible. It uses Annales archaeology to describe how people farmed and herded and built and buried – and made love, and how knowing such things helps people of one time and place – us – understand the
people of another time and place – them. And *Stories and Stones* uses Household and Gender archaeology to describe how men fathered their households, and how women managed to survive – and to thrive -- in patriarchy, and how that knowledge enriches our ability to understand and to appreciate the Bible. Annales archaeologists do not look for Joshua fighting the battle of Jericho, but for how the people of Jericho built their walls, irrigated their crops, harvested the grain found burned in their ruins. Household and Gender archaeologists do not look for the palaces of David and Solomon, but for the social structure reflected in the pillar houses of villages throughout Syria-Palestine and for the world of women whose grinders and looms emerge from excavations.

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After 1970, however, more and more full-time, professional, Syro-Palestinian archaeologists, who were not biblical scholars, raised more and more questions demonstrating a discontinuity between the world *in* the Bible and the world *of* the Bible. Consequently, archaeologists of the lands of the Bible and biblical scholars parted from their shared goals. They spent less and less time communicating with each other, which fosters the perception that the related fields of material culture and the biblical tradition have very little to contribute to each other. Even when the conversations take place, the two groups often find themselves speaking different languages.

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covenant as a model to understand their relationship with Yahweh. The Egyptians were state builders. After 1000 B.C.E. the Hebrews united their villages into a centralized state, identical, in many ways, to the state of Egypt.

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2. What is Archaeology?

Archaeology is the scientific study of cultures through the recovery, reconstruction and interpretation of material remains or artifacts like architecture, pottery, weapons and tools. Archaeology is neither plunder, nor proof-texting or nor patriotism. The goal of archaeology is to shed light on long-term human activity or culture.

3. How to Dig -- according to Kathleen Kenyon and Ian Hodder

Kathleen Kenyon (1906–1978) was a process archaeologist. She taught archaeologists how to dig with modesty and to record with accuracy. She opened only three meter squares – nine feet on a side, and she carefully described in writing and with photography the location of every artifact before removing it. The goal of the Wheeler-Kenyon method or process is to allow scholars to reconstruct, in three dimensions, any excavated site.

Ian Hodder (Stanford University) is a post-processual archaeologist. He digs like Kathleen Kenyon --- modestly and accurately -- but thinks in a radically different way about what to look for. Kenyon looked for the past. Hodder looks for the past and the present. What the people living around the site want to find; what the students working in the squares want to find; what the departments of antiquities and tourism want to find; what the women’s movement wants to find; and what scholars want to find, in fact, influences what is found. Hodder identifies those expectations before going into the field, and addresses those expectations in reading the artifacts

Neolithic Culture in the World of the Bible 8500-4300 B.C.E.

Neolithic cultures were the epoch primeval in which the Hebrews set the Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel. Neolithic peoples invented new ways to farm, to herd, to build houses, to make tools, to make pottery and to link the human plane where they lived with the divine plane of their divine patrons and their dead. These practical inventions not only produced radical changes in daily life; they also inspired dramatic changes in the way that Neolithic peoples understood life.

4. Snakes and Childbearing in the Stories of Adam & Eve

The Neolithic cultures were the epoch primeval where the Hebrews set the Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel. The snake that tutors the man and the woman in the Stories of Adam and Eve, also tutors the household of Cain. The snake is more a teacher, than a tempter. She teaches humans that having a child and having a harvest require labor. These snakes guard
thresholds to remind those who go out of the household that human fertility is demanding. Snakes remind humans that they must labor to survive.

5. Human Sacrifice and Farming in the Stories of Cain & Abel

The Story of Adam and Eve as Farmers and Child-bearers (Gen 2:25-4:2) and the Stories of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:3-5:32) are not sequels demonstrating the spread of sin, but parallels celebrating the founding of a new world, where humans can create. Eve learns to have a child, Cain learns to have a harvest. Using social scientific studies of human sacrifice in Mediterranean and pre-Columbian cultures, it is possible to argue that it is the soil, not Yahweh, “...which had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering it had no regard” (Gen 4:4-5), and that Cain sacrifices, rather than murders Abel (Gen 4:8).

Chalcolithic Culture in the World of the Bible
4300-3300 B.C.E.

The Chalcolithic Age (4300-3300 B.C.E.) in the world of the Bible marks the transition from tools and weapons made of flint stone to tools and weapons made of copper metal. Chalcolithic shepherds and farmers learned to identify copper ore, to smelt the copper, and to cast tools and weapons using the 'lost wax' technique. Chalcolithic artists also worked in ivory, clay and stone. Chalcolithic villages were usually built on rivers or in rich valleys. As in Neolithic cultures, the divine patrons of Chalcolithic cultures were Godmothers. The relationship between the living and the dead also changed. Neolithic dead were buried under the houses of the living; Chalcolithic dead, however, were buried outside their villages.

6. Godmothers in the Book of Proverbs

Chalcolithic cultures celebrated creators like this wise woman as Godmothers. They portrayed them with great hips from bearing many children and with full breasts for nursing them. The Creator in the Book of Proverbs is a Wise Woman, a midwife. She is “the firstborn of the ways of Yahweh, the forerunner of the great works of Yahweh” (Prov 8:22), and the “master worker” (Prov 8:30). She celebrates, “delights,” or “rejoices” in each new creature by singing hymns praising Yahweh for having given birth to such magnificent children (Prov 8:31).

Early Bronze Culture in the World of the Bible
3300-2300 B.C.E.

At the beginning of the Early Bronze period (3300 B.C.E.) two great states developed; one in Mesopotamia between the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers, and one along the banks of the Nile River. Both had centralized surplus economies supervised by bureaucratic governments. Writing was an important tool for governing these states and for organizing their people to build public works: irrigation systems, walled cities, temples, palaces and tombs. EB is the beginning of history and civilization in the world of the Bible. The divine patrons of these states were no longer Godmothers who nurtured the land and its people, but Godfathers who protected the land and its people from their enemies.

7. Sodom and Gomorrah in the Stories of Abraham and Sarah

The Early Bronze Cultures were the setting for the Stories of Lot and His Daughters. There were a household in one of the great cities that filled six valleys on the east shore of the Dead Sea. Early Bronze cities in five of these valleys were destroyed between 2450–2350 B.C.E. In 1924 William F. Albright (1891–1971) excavated the city in the northern most valley, and identified Bab ed-Dra as Sodom. Later excavators identified Numeria as Gomorrah and es-Safi as Zoar. Further
excavations at Bab ed-Dra in 1965, 1967 and 1973 uncovered a 23-inch thick city wall, along with numerous houses and a large temple. Outside the city were cemeteries where thousands of skeletons were unearthed clearly demonstrating that Bab ed-Dra had been well populated during the early Bronze Age. A massive fire had destroyed the city and charred roofs, posts and bricks in a cemetery almost a mile outside the city. The site lay buried under a coating of ash several feet thick. Numeria also had seven feet of ash in some places. Zoar was not destroyed by fire, but was abandoned. The ash deposits turned the soil into a spongy charcoal and made it impossible to rebuild. These ruins fascinated the Hebrews of the Iron Age (1200-1000 B.C.E.). They wanted to know who built such magnificent cities and why they were destroyed.

The challenge is not to search for long-lost cities, but to understand why the Hebrews told creation stories like the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (Gen 1:1–2:4), the Stories of Adam and Eve (Gen 2:4–4:2), the Stories of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:3–5:32), the Flood Stories (Gen 6:1–11:26) and the Stories of Sodom and Gomorrah. These stories provide little truly scientific information about the origins of the world or the origins of humanity. Planetary geology, paleontology, and archaeology are modern, not ancient interests. The Hebrews lacked both the data for and the interest in forging a chain between themselves and early humans. The Hebrews told creation stories to put human life in their time into perspective. Their creation stories are not reports on the past. They are timeless reflections on human life. They explore questions about life and death. The Hebrews set their creation stories during the epoch primeval and the Early Bronze period, which does not date events, it qualifies them. Setting the action of a story in the epoch primeval does not explain when something took place, but why things are the way they are in the time when the story itself is told. Only events of universal significance take place in the epoch primeval. Stories set in the epoch primeval and the Early Bronze period are philosophical or theological, not geological or paleontological.

8. Rites of Fall in the Stories of Jephthah

Austen Henry Layard (1817-94) excavated Nimrud in 1845 for the British Museum, locating both the palace of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) and the library of Ashurbanipal (667-626 BCE) where he recovered the Stories of Isthar and Tammuz in Akkadian. To understand the transition from the dry to the wet season farmers in Early Bronze cultures told the stories of Tammuz (Sumerian: Dumuzi) and Ishtar (Sumerian: Inanna). They were lovers separated by death, but reunited by love. Tammuz descends into the land of the dead, and Ishtar faithfully pursues and rescues him. The stories tell not only of two lovers, but also of the death of the earth during the long dry season, and its rebirth at the beginning of the wet season during the celebration of the New Year. Like the last drops of moisture which the parched soil sucked deep into the earth, Tammuz is drawn by stages into the land of the dead. Like the rain which moistens the soil at the end of the dry season so that farmers can plow and plant, the tears of Ishtar in the land of the dead bring Tammuz back to life. She raises him from the dead like the first leaves of the crops that sprout through the soil under a farmer's care at the beginning of the growing season. The story “Jephthah Delivers Israel from Ammon” notes that "... for four days every year the daughters of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephthah..." (Judg 11:39-40), which describe the way these rites of fall were celebrated in Israel.

Middle Bronze Culture in the World of the Bible
2300-1550 B.C.E.

Many of the four-hundred Middle Bronze sites in Syria-Palestine are not on trade routes. Therefore, Middle Bronze culture seems to have been developed by survivors of the EB cities who took refuge in the villages surrounding their cities, rather than to be the culture of Amurr or Amorite invaders. Like their EB predecessors MB peoples eventually constructed new cities with palaces, temples, walls, gates and houses. MB Egyptian inscriptions name Beth Shan, Jerusalem,
Laish (Hebrew: Tel Dan), Shechem, Hazor, and Beth-Shemesh. At Mari (Arabic: Tell Hariri) twenty-five thousand MB trade, legal and diplomatic documents were recovered.

During MB (1640-1532 B.C.E.) the Hyksos, a federation of Semitic peoples from Syria-Palestine, invaded Egypt as far south as Abydos. Their capital city at Avaris (Arabic: Tell ed-Dab'a) as well as Tell el-Yahudiyeh, Heliopolis and Tell el-Maskhuta contained the same large migdol temples, household cemeteries, donkey burials, weapons, grave goods, coarse and simple MB pottery with few shapes and little decoration common at MB sites in Syria-Palestine. The Teachings of Joseph in the book of Genesis are set in the days of these Hyksos. Eventually, however, Egyptians led by Kamose (1555-1550 B.C.E.) and Ahmose (1550-1525 B.C.E.) attacked the Hyksos empire from the south, and Mitanni invaded Syria-Palestine from the north bringing the MB period to an end.

9. “Binding Isaac” in the Stories of Abraham and Sarah

Middle Bronze Cultures were the setting for the Stories of Abraham and the Stories of Sarah, Jacob, Leah and Rachel. The identity of the candidate for the ordeals at Beer-lahai-roi, Beersheba and on Mt. Moriah was not as significant in the world of the Bible as it has become in the world of ongoing tensions between Muslims and Jews today. The unresolved question is: “Who is to be the heir to the household of Abraham? Is it Ishmael, or is it Isaac?” The ordeal of Isaac in the Story of Abraham on Mt. Moriah or the order of Ishmael in the Stories of Hagar from Beer-lahai-roi and from Beersheba equally resolves the issue. Ordeals allow a decision to be made. In an ordeal, defendants are exposed to strenuous, life-threatening experiences. If they survive, then the divine assembly has cleared them of the charges made against them, and the honor of their households is reaffirmed. If they do not, then their households are shamed.

10. “Household Gods” in the Stories of Jacob, Leah, Rachel

The Hebrews were a people on the margins of their world. Like all marginal peoples, the Hebrews admired the clever who improved themselves at the expense of the establishment. Cleverness was the wisdom of the poor. Therefore, Jacob tricks Esau into selling him his birthright (Gen 25:19–34), Isaac into designating him as his heir (Gen 27:1–45), Laban into selling him his sheep (Gen 30:25–43) and his land (Gen 31:1–32:3), and even Yahweh into letting him cross the Jabbok into the promised land (Gen 32:23–33). The household of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel knew how to work the system to their own advantage. Cuneiform tablets from Nuzi, an important Mesopotamian city around 1500 B.C.E., now document the household of Jacob’s legal sophistication by showing that birthrights could be bought and sold; that oral wills, even when conferred on the wrong beneficiary, were irrevocable; that fathers of households without natural heirs like Laban could adopt an heir like Jacob (Gen 29:1–30); and that the titles to property belonged to whomever could produce the teraphim statues of a household’s divine patrons (Gen 31:19–35).

11. Aprodisiacs in the Stories of Jacob, Leah, Rachel

Jacob, Leah, and Rachel could not only manipulate the powerful, but use nature to their advantage as well. Leah uses mandrake plants to conceive a child (Gen 30:14–21). Mandrakes are only one plant that the clever in traditional societies use to help the childless conceive. Likewise, Jacob builds a breeding corral from multicolored poles so that his sheep will conceive multicolored lambs. Traditional societies have a wonderful inventory of techniques like this for priming nature to imitate human behavior. Nonetheless, the Stories of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel are quite balanced in their assessment of cleverness, which is, at best, only a temporary challenge to the establishment. The clever are fugitives at risk. Consequently, the household of Jacob is always on the run, a wandering Aramean (Deut 26:5–10). Esau (Gen 27:30–45), Isaac (Gen 27:46–28:9), and Laban (Gen 31:1–24) all exile the household of Jacob when they discover their losses. The household of Jacob that outwits Isaac is eventually outwitted by Simon and Levi (Gen 34:1–31). Their stories do not celebrate cleverness to teach that cheating and stealing is all right for
ancestors, but not for ordinary people. Biblical cleverness celebrates the tenacity with which the poor survive and honors the divine patron of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel for helping the poor, rather than supporting the powerful (Gen 49:24; Isa 1:24; 49:26; 60:16; Ps 132:3–5).

12. Herding in the Book of Psalms (Ps 23)

The Middle Bronze period was the setting for a Hymn to Yahweh as a Herder (Ps 23). Larsa was a Middle Bronze period city which prospered between 2030 and 1763 BCE in southern Mesopotamia. It was located near Ash Shatrah in modern Iraq. Ash Shatrah is on the Euphrates River about two-hundred miles south of Baghdad. Archaeologists there have recovered a number of contracts between livestock owners and their herders. The herders' skills are not simply the talents of a gifted individual but the corporate resources of a household. In Larsa, herding was hereditary, and in a number of cases households of herders worked for the same livestock owner year after year.

Larsa's bookkeepers noted that livestock owners negotiated to pay their herders either a flat fee or a commission as payment for their services. A herder's fee for one season might be a certain number of young stock or a weight of wool, dairy products, clothing, or grain. Commissions, on the other hand, were generally figured in one of two ways. At Larsa, owners expected eighty percent of their ewes to bear lambs, and they planned to lose fifteen percent of a herd to predators or disease. Consequently, some owners paid their herders with all the lambs over the projected eighty percent increase or with any animals which survived the projected fifteen percent loss.

Owners and herders cut covenants once a year. During a roundup (Akkadian: huqfinu) or sheep shearing (Gen 38:12), one herding season was concluded and another begun. Owners and herders counted livestock, sheared wool, and settled accounts according to the terms of the covenant which they cut with one another the previous year. Then they negotiated a new covenant for the herding season ahead. The contract between the owner and the herder identified not only the breed animals consigned to the herder but also the basis on which the yield of the herd was calculated.

Nuzi is a Late Bronze period city (1500-1250 ICE) where archaeologists have also recovered herding contracts. Nuzi (Arabic: Yorghnn Tepe) today is near Kirkuk, Iraq about one-hundred fifty miles north of Baghdad. At Nuzi, contracts indicate that the livestock roundup took place in May. From November through April its herders grazed their sheep near the city. From May through October they grazed them in foreign pastures.

At Nuzi, a standard herd included some thirty-eight animals. Ninety percent of a herd would be adult animals. Seventy-eight percent were ewes, serviced by a single ram. The number was not arbitrary. but economic. With thirty-eight animals, more or less, herders at Nuzi maximized breeding, production of wool and goat hair, dairy products, and meat. The number also allowed the herd to sustain losses and still recover its standard strength while in the field.

Sheep in the world of the Bible were expected to live seven to ten years. Ewes gestate lambs for about five months. Herders who bred in May expected their ewes to drop their lambs in October or November. Herders would slaughter animals that were between eighteen and thirty months old, although animals only twelve months old were also slaughtered as a delicacy.

There were about two sheep for every goat in the flock. Goats were mixed with sheep because goats browse and sheep do not. Goats eat only the leaves of the grass, leaving the stem and roots intact, and thus allowing the pasture to recover. Sheep consume the entire plant, thus totally destroying the pasture in a single season. Nonetheless the sheep will follow the browsing goats and thus not overgraze and destroy a pasture. Goats are also harder than sheep, and they are not as susceptible to disease and deprivation. Furthermore, they are better climbers than sheep and thus have access to additional pasture areas. At Nuzi, owners projected a fifteen percent loss of sheep during a season, but only a fourteen percent loss for goats. Thus, during difficult seasons or in harsh climates like the Negeb, herders increased the ratio of goats to sheep in order to maintain the
stability of the herd as a whole.

Besides finding copies of the contracts between owners and herders, archaeologists have also recovered promissory notes (Akkadian: *uiuddij*) recording herders' commitments to repay the owner for any animals lost because of negligence. On the one hand, herders were not responsible for animals lost due to an "act of God" (Akkadian: *lipit Mm*), and they might be excused from repaying the loss if the livestock were killed by another animal or if the herder could show that he had not been negligent. The hides of the lost animals were produced as evidence (HSS 15.196 *me-du-ti*, read as *mituti*). Human negligence, on the other hand, cost the households of contract herders dearly. For example, at Larsa a sheep cost 1.33 shekels of silver, approximately the average ration of grain which the household of a herder consumed in three months, or about three months' salary.

**Late Bronze Culture in the World of the Bible**

**1550-1200 B.C.E.**

Most Late Bronze cities were on the coastal plains and were not fortified. To the east were the forested foothills with only a few cities: Jerusalem, Lachish, Bethel, Shechem and Hazor. Egypt stationed governors and military detachments in Syria-Palestine to represent its interests. These governors leased the land to rulers to harvest raw materials like flax and to produce manufactured goods like rope for Egypt. Surrounding city trade centers were villages of farmers and herders. Governors set quotas of goods and services for each village. Representatives of these villages lived in cities to protect their goods in transit.

The political reforms of Pharaoh Akhenaten (1364–1347 B.C.E.) plunged Egypt into economic turmoil. Egypt recalled its governors and soldiers from Syria-Palestine. Those Egyptian officials who remained were powerless to harvest and process raw materials. Households began to abandon their villages and pioneer new ones in the hills above the Jordan River. Some warriors became raiders who attacked caravans moving to and from trade centers. Officials filled diplomatic pouches to Akhenaten’s government at Amarna with urgent appeals for help. These letters describe conditions similar to those in the books of Joshua and Judges.

13. Slavery in the Death of the Firstborn of Egypt

Late Bronze cultures were the setting for the Hebrews’ great creation stories in the books of Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy: The Death of the Firstborn of Egypt (Exod 1:7—13:16) and the Creation of the Firstborn of Israel (Exod 13:17—Num 27:11). Slavery in the world of the Bible was not the crime of human bondage that appeared in such cruel forms in the colonization of the Americas, when Native Americans and then Africans were trapped, sold, and worked like animals. Biblical slavery was a form of financing used to borrow money and to pay debts to both households and to the state. There are time limitations for debt slaves (Exod 21:2), and stipulations governing the disposition of the property of male slaves upon final payment of their debts (Exod 21:3–4). There is a procedure for permanently changing the status of a household from free to slave (Exod 21:5–6). The conversion protected the household from taxes and creditors, much like declaring bankruptcy today. The disposition of a slave designated to become the mother or the daughter of the household as part of a covenant that has been abrogated is also carefully regulated (Exod 21:7–11). The father of the household may not sell her as a slave to any other household. He may negotiate a new covenant with her household or he may return her to her household as long as he has not had sexual intercourse with her. He may also allow his son to marry her; he may keep her as a secondary wife as long as he provides her with food, clothing, and has sexual intercourse with her; or he may allow her to leave as a free woman.

14. Plagues and Miracles in the Death of the Firstborn of Egypt
The Plagues Stories demonstrate the sterility of the old world that the pharaohs built. They are a parody or satire that ridicules Egypt and its traditions by treating them flippantly and by telling the creation stories of Egypt in an inappropriate and trivial manner. They contrast the Egypt of the pharaohs with the world of Yahweh. To understand the Plagues Stories it is necessary to understand something of both the technology and the traditions of Egypt. The creatures in the plagues are caricatures of the great households of Egypt and their totems. Totems are the animal ancestors who give birth to humans and then protect and befriend them. The Nile is the totem of the household of Hapy. The sun is the totem of the household of Ra. The bull is the totem of the household of Apis. Plagues shame these great households. The Nile and its canals, which were the pride of Egypt, are satirized as a sewer that pollutes the fields and infects the villages. The cattle bred by temple ranchers and the great Apis bull are scorned as carriers of the hoof-and-mouth disease that decimates Egypt’s population.

15. The Gold Calf in Creation of the Firstborn of Israel

Cultures throughout the world of the Bible carried their divine patrons on pedestals in processions to visit the land and their people. These pedestals were not images but vehicles. In Egypt, the pedestals were shaped like boats. In Syria-Palestine they were lions or bulls like those recovered at Tel Ashkelon and the Bull Site near Ibleam. Yahweh rode on two different pedestals. One was the Ark of the Covenant, the other a great bull, which a Trial of Aaron (Exod 32:1–35) calls a “Golden Calf.” Aaron uses the jewelry of the Hebrews to gold-plate a wooden statue of a great bull on whose back Yahweh will ride into battle against their enemies. Jeroboam, who won independence for the northern Hebrew villages from the household of David and Solomon after 932 B.C.E., commissioned two bull pedestals for Yahweh. He erected one in the sanctuary at Dan and the other in the sanctuary at Bethel. The Ark of the Covenant was shaped like a high place. It was a gold-plated dias dais or platform. Yahweh stood invisible between two cherubim or sphinx, with the faces of humans, the bodies of lions, the feet of oxen, and the wings of eagles. The spot where Yahweh stood was called the “mercy seat.”

16. Sex in the Stories of Tamar and Judah

Tamar poses as a nuditu woman. In Babylon nuditu women came from households who could not afford to negotiate a marriage covenant for their daughters. To protect the financial resources of the household, a portion of the estate was given directly to the daughter to invest instead of investing it in the household of a husband. With all the skill of a nuditu woman, Tamar deals with Judah meticulously and efficiently. She sets her commission as a share of the coming season's herd and collects Judah's staff and seal as collateral before providing him a loan. Judah is a fool who does not even recognize that his patron is, in fact, his daughter-in-law. Judah's foolishness is even further displayed in the incompetence with which he negotiates with her for the coming season. Judah recognizes his lack of good business sense when he tries to repay the loan and the sacred woman is gone. His irresponsibility in negotiating and repaying the loan with the woman of Enaim summarizes his irresponsibility to Tamar and the household of Er. Instead of restoring the household, Judah's actions have placed it in greater jeopardy.

17. Jericho in the Stories of Joshua

Charles Warren (1867–68) dug three thirty-foot shafts into the tell and determined that the 70-foot high, 10-acre mound (1200 N-S x 600 E-W feet) was artificial, not natural. Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger (1907–09, 1911) mapped the Middle Bronze period (1600 B.C.E.) retaining wall, 15 feet high, at the base of the tell. Using a pottery chronology now considered faulty, John Gartstang (1930–36) dated mud-brick wall and city at stratum iv to the Late Bronze period and their destruction to Joshua (1400–1380 B.C.E.). Kathleen Kenyon (1952–58), whose reports were finally published in 1981–83, dug three trenches on N, W, and S sides of the tell, dated the tower (25 feet diam., 25 feet high) to Neolithic period (7000 B.C.E.), mud-brick wall (6.5 feet wide, 12 feet high)
and 40-degree glacis to the Early Bronze period, but mud-brick wall and city at stratum iv to the Middle Bronze period (1350 B.C.E.) because there was no Mycenaean pottery associated with either. For her, Jericho was a strongly fortified Hyksos city during the Middle Bronze period. Like the Hebrews, the Hyksos were a Semitic people. They ruled an empire that stretched from Avaris near Cairo today to the Carmel Mountains near Haifa. Their city at Jericho was destroyed more than 250 years before Joshua, and remained abandoned until 716 B.C.E., when Hezekiah rebuilt it. More than one explanation has been offered to reconcile the destruction of Jericho described in the book of Joshua with the lack of solid archaeological evidence that a city existed at the site in the days of Joshua. Perhaps the traditions describing the conquest of Jericho and Ai (Joshua 1–9) are not battle reports.

18. The Sun in the Stories of Joshua

“Amorite” was the word used in Mesopotamia for all of the people who lived “west” of the Euphrates River. In Yahweh Delivers Gibeon from Westerners (Josh 10:1-43) the word refers to all the peoples of Syria-Palestine. Gibeon is attacked from all four points of the compass, plus one. The city is surrounded. Yahweh “…threw them into panic, …chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon …struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah”. (Josh 10:10) Yahweh, not Joshua delivers Gibeon. The battle takes place during the wet season, when five-eight days of hail – “…huge stones from heaven” (Josh 10:11) -- are common. Yahweh not only orders the hail to attack the Westerners, but the sun and the moon as well. Yahweh orders the sun and the moon to cut off the Westerners from their two escape routes: the ascent of Beth-horon or Aijalon and the highway to Azekah and Makkedah. Yahweh similarly mobilizes the sun, the rain, the sun and the moon in the Book of Habakkuk (Hab 3:11) and the Book of Judges (Judg 5:20). The sun and the moon delayed the Westerners escape long enough for the divine warriors to execute the sentence of the divine assembly on the enemies of Gibeon. In Assyrian tradition it is a sign of victory when the sun and the moon appear together in the sky on the day of battle. The Hebrews pray that Yahweh will order the sun and the moon to prevent their enemies from escaping.

Israel watched and prayed…

“Oh Yahweh, order the Sun to cut off Gibeon on the east;  
Order the Moon to cut off the Aijalon Valley on the west.  
Let the Sun hold its place,  
And the Moon stand firm!”

…while Yahweh defeated its enemies.

19. Goliath in the Stories of David

Hatshepsut (1473-1458) built Amun’s Temple around a soil mound in the Valley of Pharaohs where Amun called cosmos from chaos. Ramses III (1194-1163) built Medinet Habu here to celebrate himself as human and divine. His chapel incorporated Amun’s Temple, and was modeled on the Ramesseum of Ramses II (1290-1224). Like Amun, Ramses preserved Egypt’s cosmos from Sea Peoples’ chaos; like Ramses II, he ruled over Egypt in its prime. “David Delivers Israel from Goliath” (1 Sam 17:1-58) celebrates David as Ramses of Israel. David confronts Philistine chaos, creates Israel’s cosmos, but fights alone.

Iron I Culture in the World of the Bible
1200-1000 B.C.E.

Israel as Villages (1200-1000 B.C.E.)
The world of the Bible comprised at least four different worlds; the first was the village culture of early Israel (1200-1000 B.C.E.). Villages use a decentralized political system to feed and protect their people. When great wars of commerce and conquest brought down the international trade empires of Mycenae, Hatti, and Egypt about 1250 B.C.E., survivors in Syria-Palestine had neither the resources nor the desire to rebuild the social system which had enslaved them. Therefore, the economy of early Israel was a subsistence economy. There would be no monarchs, no taxes, no soldiers, no slaves, and no cities. It was a demanding and idealistic society.

20. Divorce in the Stories of Ruth

The Story of Ruth is set in the Iron I period. When the tribe turned a household over to a legal guardian, it expected him to return the household to the control of its heir (Lev 25:25-28). Particularly vibrant households may have been able to recover their independence from a guardian as soon as an heir was born and adopted, thus within a year or two of the death of its father. In such cases the mother of the household would have functioned legally as the trustee for her infant son until he was mature enough to assume the day-to-day responsibilities of running the household himself. But more often guardians would have had to administer the households assigned to their care for some years. Thus it was up to the guardian to determine when to turn the household over to the heir.

Since the guardian was given the authority to decide when to grant a household independence, an unscrupulous guardian could deprive a household of its income (Gen 38:1-11). In such cases, the wife could take legal action to remove the guardian. For example, she could file a complaint before the elders in the village assembly, who then subpoenaed the guardian and attempted to mediate a settlement. If the guardian remained intransigent, the widow could impeach him by removing his sandal, spitting in his face, and declaring: "This is what is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house" (Deut 25:9). Only in Ruth (Ruth 4:9) does the guardian himself issue a quit claim and refuse to take up his obligation to redeem the land and marry the widow by removing his own sandal.

Sandals are simply leather soles fastened to the feet by thongs drawn between the toes and tied around the wearer's ankles. They were the ordinary footwear in the ancient Near East, but they were also a very symbolic item of clothing, especially in the relationship between the widow and her legal guardian.

In the world of the Bible, land was purchased not by the acre but rather by the hour. Buyers paid for whatever size triangle of land they could walk off in an hour, a day, a week, or a month (2 Kgs 21:16-17). They surveyed land in triangles, constructed a bench marble with a cairn of fieldstones or an altar at each point of the triangle to serve as a boundary marker. To increase the speed of their surveys, buyers wore sandals. Since they walked off the land in sandals, the sandals became the movable title to that land. And they became the uniform which distinguished a landowner. By removing the sandals of her guardian (Deut 25:5-7; Ruth 4:7), a widow removed his authorization to administer the land of her household. (Lev 27:7; Job 15:31; 20:18; 28:17) In this gesture the sandal is the land title.

But in the Bible the sandal is also a symbol of the woman herself, which has been placed on the foot of her guardian. Therefore, by removing her guardian's sandal the widow was not only removing his authority over her deceased husband's land but also his authority to have intercourse with her until she had a child (Isa 5:8; Mic 2:2). Removing the sandal of the legal guardian enacts coitus interruptus, where the sandal is a euphemism for her vagina, the foot of the guardian is a euphemism for his penis.

21. Weaving and Rope-making in the Stories of Rahab
The Story of Rahab is set in the Iron I period. References to flax and rope in the story may suggest that the household of Rahab made rope from flax for Egypt. Wild flax is a delicate plant with beautiful blue flowers and is native to Syria-Palestine. As early as 5000 B.C.E., farmers began domesticating the first of some two hundred species eventually used throughout the world of the Bible for linseed oil, fodder, cloth, and rope. The Gezer Almanac assigns a month for harvesting flax. Farmers pulled the stalks when the seeds were ripe and dried them. Refiners pressed the seeds to extract linseed oil. The dregs became animal fodder. After soaking the stalks to ret, or loosen, the outer fibers, they spread them on rooftops to dry. Weavers hackled, or combed, the fibers from the inner core and spun them into thread. The short, tangled fibers left over from the combing were tow (Judg 16:9), which made a coarse yarn. Flax and wool were the standard fibers used to weave clothing until the development of cotton.

22. Baking in the Stories of Thebez

In *A Woman delivers Thebez from Abimelech* (Judg 9:22-57) Abimelech attacks Thebez (Hebrew: Tirzah) and breaches the wall into the lower city. The people of Thebez take refuge in the upper city. Abimelech fights his way to the wall of the upper city and tries to set fire to its wooden gates. While Abimelech is close to the wall, a woman drops a grinding stone on him, breaking his neck.

Like the weapons of Jael the weapon of the woman of Thebez is unorthodox, but familiar. The same skills and strength that she uses to grind flour every day for her household, she uses to defend it. She crushes the head of Abimelech like she crushes the heads of grain. The man who crushed the gate of her city is crushed by the woman he threatened.

Mortally wounded Abimelech orders the warrior who carries his shield to kill him so that people cannot say that a woman killed him. Instead, Abimelech’s shame-filled death became a taunt: *Who killed Abimelech son of Jerubbaal? Did not a woman drop a grinding stone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez?* (2 Sam 11:21)

The tools of peace become the weapons of war. Ordinary people *beat their plowshares into swords* (Joel 3:10). The same things that women use to make their homes, they also use to defend them. They are not professional warriors; they are citizen soldiers. They fight in support of Yahweh the divine warrior. Their powerlessness makes it clear to audiences that it is Yahweh, and not Thebez or Jael who delivers the people from their enemies. Yahweh does not lift up professional soldiers to lead the Hebrews from slavery to freedom. The heroes in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are ordinary men and women who use the tools of their trade to deliver the Hebrews from their enemies. The woman of Thebez kills Abimelech with the upper half (Spanish: mano) of her grinding stone made of basalt a hard, black volcanic rock. Likewise, Jael kills Sisera with her mallet and peg made of wood.

The physical strength of Thebez and Jael, like the physical strength of average Iron I women, is remarkable. Everyday Iron I women hauled water, toted fuel, milked goats, spun wool, weaved cloth, ground grain and baked bread for themselves and their households. The average weight of a grinding stone at Tell al-Umayari in Jordan, for example, is six pounds, thirteen ounces. In the 1998 excavation season alone some eighteen saddle stones and some forty-five grinding stones were recovered. The woman of Thebez undoubtedly would have been strong enough to drop a grinding stone. Her strength wins the battle for Thebez and for Israel. She is an ordinary woman who uses the ordinary resources at hand to achieve heroic results.

In the world of the Bible women ground grain using a saddle stone (Hebrew: *pelah tahtit*). This grain mill had two parts. The lower part was the saddle -- a concave stone that was about 1½ to 3 feet long and ½ to 1½ ft wide. The upper part was the grinding stone -- a loaf-shaped stone (Hebrew: *pelah rekeb*; Spanish: mano). The grinding stone could be grasped easily with one hand. It was about as long as the saddle stone was wide.
Typically, these mills were made of black basalt because the hard yet porous stone provides a rough surface and many cutting edges. Both parts of these mills, whole or broken, are found in Bronze and Iron Age sites throughout Syria-Palestine.

Throwing her grinding stone was not only an act of strength, but also an act of desperation for Thebez. Once the grinding stone was gone, she could no longer make bake bread for her household which women did every day.

Furthermore, basalt was a luxury in her region of Syria-Palestine. There were no local quarries for basalt, making it difficult for her to replace the grinding stone. Mills were so critical to the survival of a household that they could not be used as collateral for a loan. No one shall take a mill or even the grinding stone as collateral, for that would be holding every member of the household hostage. (Deut 24:6)

23. Tentmaking in the Stories of Jael

Two remarkable hero stories in the book of Judges -- Jael Delivers Israel from Harosheth-ha-goiim (Judg 4:17-24) and A Woman delivers Thebez from Abimelech (Judg 9:22-57) – celebrate women as chiefs. Like Shamgar, David, Ehud, Gideon and Samson, Jael and Thebez rally their tribes to deliver their households from slavery to their enemies.

A predictable signature of a chief in early Israel is an unorthodox weapon. During the Iron I period the Philistines set the standards for military hardware with the weapons forged from iron. Yet these state of the art weapons wielded by the Philistines and the soldiers of the other surplus cultures in Syria-Palestine were no match for the unorthodox weapons wielded by the heroes lifted up by Yahweh to deliver the Hebrews from slavery. Ehud uses a two-edged knife (Judg 3:16). Jael uses a mallet and a tent peg (Judg 4:21). Shamgar uses an ox-goad (Judg 4:31). Thebez uses a stone rolling pin (Judg 9:53). Samson uses the jawbone of an ass (Judg 15:15). The heroes in the book of Judges use the tools with which they feed their household to protect them.

In Jael Delivers Israel from Harosheth-ha-goiim (Judg 4:17-24), Sisera invades the tent of Jael with the intention of raping her, and taking over the household of Heber, her husband. Jael allows Sisera to think that she will be his accomplice against her husband. Foolishly, the overconfident Sisera lays down to rest in Jael’s tent. When he has fallen asleep, she fetches a hammer and a peg and kills him.

Jael’s weapons are unorthodox, but they are familiar. The same skills and strength that she uses to pitch her tent, she uses to defend it. She drives the peg through Sisera’s skull with the same speed with which she normally sinks it into the ground. The man who penetrated the door of her tent is penetrated by the woman he threatened.

24. Arks, mice and hemmeroids in the Stories of Samuel

Once Dagon surrendered, Yahweh “dealt severely with the people of Ashdod. He ravaged and afflicted the city and its vicinity with hemorrhoids; he brought upon the city a great and deadly plague of mice that swarmed in their ships and over their fields” (1 Sam 5:6). It is unlikely that the weapons of Yahweh against Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron are either hemorrhoids or bubonic plague. Bubonic plague is spread by rats, not mice. Furthermore, bubonic plague had not yet appeared in the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine during the Late Bronze period. It is more likely that Yahweh sends mice, not rats, to eat the grain of Philistia. Similarly, it is more likely that Yahweh does not strike the Philistines with hemorrhoids, but prolapses the uteruses of their women. The harvests of Philistia are destroyed, and the women of Philistia become infertile. Yahweh is the divine patron of both land and children, even in Philistia.
By casting a mouse and a diseased or prolapsed uterus in gold, each of the five cities of Philistia acknowledges that only Yahweh can bless them with land and children. These figurines are fetishes, which are images of the causes or of the symptoms of a disease. Shamans use fetishes like magnets to draw disease out of their patients. Once the disease has left the patient and entered the fetish, the fetish can be isolated or destroyed. Isolating or destroying the fetish isolates or destroys the disease.

The Philistines load their fetishes on an ox-drawn cart and send them with the Ark of the Covenant back across their border into Israel. By returning the Ark of the Covenant to the Hebrews, the Philistines renounce their title as conquerors of Israel. By placing the fetishes on the cart with the Ark of the Covenant, they hope to lure the plague out of Philistia and into Israel. The Philistines hope that the Hebrews, in their excitement to recover the ark, will not realize that they are also infecting themselves with plague. The Philistine strategy is comparable to that used by the Greeks in Homer’s Iliad. The Greeks leave the Trojans a great wooden horse on the beach as they sail away from the coast. By offering the Trojans this gift, the Greeks renounce their title as conquerors of Troy. The Greeks also hope that the Trojans, in their excitement to take possession of the great horse, will not realize that they are also bringing the Greek warriors hiding inside the statue through the gates and into the city, and sentencing Troy to death.

Ironically, the Hebrews of the village of Beth-Shemesh on the border between Israel and Philistia are harvesting grain. The Philistines are starving, but the Hebrews are eating. As the Philistines had hoped, the Hebrews accept the Ark of the Covenant. Only the household of Jeconiah is aware of the impending disaster that the fetishes bring into Israel. When seventy warriors of Beth-Shemesh die while celebrating their victory over Philistia, the Hebrews exile the ark to the village of Kiriath-Jearim, which is a Gibeonite, not a Hebrew village. The ark remains outside Israel until David repatriates it to Jerusalem years later. The ark would not vindicate either the Philistines or the Hebrews for their parts in a war that the divine assembly did not call. Both Philistines and Hebrews learn from the experience that fertility is a divine blessing, not a human achievement.

Iron II Culture in the World of the Bible
1000 B.C.E. – 610 C.E.

Israel as States (1000-586 B.C.E.)

Israel as States (1000-586 B.C.E.) was the setting for the the Stories of David’s Rise to Power (1 Sam 8:4—2 Sam 8:13), the Stories of David’s Sucessor (2 Sam 9:1—20:26+1 KGs 1:1—11:43) and the Review of the Annals for the Monarchs of Israel and Judah. This was also the setting for books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and Amos. During the Iron II period one unresolved military crisis after the other in the Hebrew villages provided support for shift from government by a village assembly of elders to the strong-man leadership of first Saul and then David. No longer could a tribe of villages defend themselves against the combined forces of their enemies so in order to protect their land and people, the elders relinquished their authority. (2 Sam 10:6) So the Hebrews broke out their villages in the Hills of Judah and began to occupy, purchase or conquer new land to the east, west, and south. (2 Sam 8) David like a pharaoh turned these new lands over to members of his household (1 Sam 8:14; 22:7-8; 2 Sari 9:7; 14:30; 1 Kgs 2:26) creating a strong political and economic network called “Israel”. By the end of Solomon's reign (925 B.C.E.) the evolution of Israel as villages into Israel as a state was complete.

25. Sex in the Love Songs of Solomon

Erotic images in paintings, statues, seals and plaques from the ancient Near East provide an inventory of how gender and sexuality were understood in the world of the Bible, and in literary erotica like the Song of Solomon and the love songs of Egypt. Cultures develop erotic traditions to teach men and women how to make love, and to motivate them to make love. Lovemaking is
unique to its culture of origin. Seldom are the patterns of behavior established by one culture transferable to another. Erotica teaches adults the expected patterns of sexual behavior. Sexual behavior is also among the most fragile activities in any culture. Sexual behavior can be interrupted by any number of physical, emotional, or psychological factors. Erotica also motivates adults to engage in sexual activity, or to return to regular sexual activity after it has been interrupted. Erotica is not pornography. Erotic traditions focus on healthy and balanced physical relationships. Pornography promotes physical abuse, not sexual relationships.

26. Rainmaking Miracles in the Stories of Elijah

The prophets of ancient Israel were masters not only of the sounded art of word, but the silent art of movement as well. Therefore, the symbolic actions of Elijah here, like those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea (Isa 20:1–6; Jer 13:1–11; Hosea 1:1–3:5), are best understood as pantomimes. On the Carmel Mountains Elijah retells a story of creation both in words and in pantomime. Just as the royal prophets mime their prayer in dance (1 Kgs 18:26), Elijah mimes his story with two symbolic acts. He begins by rebuilding the altar as the primeval mountain representing the dry land. Then, he digs a great circular reservoir that will hold the primeval sea, just like the huge round cauldron called “the sea” (2 Kgs 16:17), “the bronze sea” (2 Kgs 25:13), or “the molten sea” (1 Kgs 7:24) outside the temple. The dirt that Elijah piles along the edges of his trench creates the great dikes or horizons that will hold in the sea.

There are two kinds of water in creation stories. The seas and great rivers threaten the cosmos (Gen 1:1; 2:6). Springs and rains sustain it (Ezek 31, 37; Ps 36:8–9). Elijah floods his model of the cosmos with the waters of the chaos. Elijah has created a model of chaos. Now, Elijah tells a creation story. The Bible no longer preserves the story but only the prayer with which he draws it to a close precisely at noon (1 Kgs 18:36). At that moment Yahweh strikes the waters of chaos with lightning. The waters recede and the dry land of the altar emerges. A new world has been created. Israel is free once again. Elijah sets the stage and tells the story that Yahweh acts out.

Elijah’s pantomime and story were easily understood by the people gathered on the Carmel Mountains. A parallel appears on a limestone stela from Ugarit cut after 2000 B.C.E. On the stela a divine patron stands poised with a spear of lightning over the primeval sea. Two other parallels from Ugarit also portray divine patrons wielding lightning bolts to drive off the waters of chaos and bring on the life-giving rain. Elijah celebrates Yahweh as a divine warrior who conquers the primeval sea and is then enthroned as creator of the cosmos (Ps 29:1–11).

27. Clothes in the Stories of Jezebel

Clothes were not worn for modesty, but for identification. Clothing was not simply an accessory reflecting individual style or personal preference. Its style, weave, and color functioned as a uniform. Changing clothes did not simply reflect a practice of good hygiene, but a change of status. Those who changed clothes were preparing to play new roles. In Mesopotamia, the word “to clothe” also meant “to exercise power.” Therefore, when monarchs put on their cloaks, they were taking up the power of their office.

When Jezebel received the report that Jehu was marching on Jezreel, she put on her royal makeup and wig, and took her place in the royal window. She indicted Jehu the moment he walked through the gate of the palace: “Have you come to surrender, you ‘Zimri,’ for the assassination of your king?” The “Zimri” scoffed at his queen in the window and said, “Who is on my side?” Two or three royal bodyguards stepped forward. The “Zimri” ordered them: “Throw her down.” So they threw her down from the balcony, and her blood spattered on the wall of the palace and on the horses of the “Zimri’s” chariot, which trampled her to death.

Like Ruth, Jezebel dresses not to be seductive, but so that she can act officially as the representative of the household of Ahab (Ruth 4:3). Ruth does not bathe, comb her hair, and put
on her best clothes simply to appear more physically attractive to Boaz, but to signal to him that she is an official representative of the household of Elimelech and Naomi (Ruth 3:3). Clothes were not a personal accessory; they were a uniform indicating social status.

Jonathan Adopts David is a tradition that portrays David as a chief who is well-advised (1 Sam 18:1–23:28). Jonathan adopts David by clothing him and becomes his patron, advising him how to succeed in becoming a chief in Israel. The same ritual is used by midwives and husbands. Midwives swaddle newborns as a sign that they have been adopted into a household (Ezek 16:4). Husbands dress their wives as a sign that they have negotiated a marriage covenant with them (Ezek 16:10). Ruth proposes marriage to Boaz by asking: “spread your cloak over me, for you are my legal guardian” (Ruth 3:9). By stripping a woman convicted of adultery naked, a household excommunicated her. (Hos 2:3)

28. Schools in the Book of Ecclesiastes

Wisdom or education was considered a precious possession in the world of the Bible and men were exhorted to seek it (Prov. 16:16). It could be gained by learning from other people (Prov. 13:20), but the search for wisdom required the right attitude of the heart and mind. The book of Proverbs and the book of Ecclesiastes indicates that the home was the place where instruction in wisdom was given to children. They refer to the teaching of both the father and mother (Prov. 1:8; 4:1-4; 6:20; 23:22) and addresses the reader as "my son" (1:10, 15; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1, 7; 6:1; 7:1; 23:26), but also mentions other teachers and instructors (5:13). There is no direct evidence for any formal education in Israel until the first century AD. In 63 AD the rabbi Joshua ben Gamla decreed that every town and village should have a school which all children would have to attend from the age of six or seven.

During Israel as States (1000-586 B.C.E.) some formal education was carried out within the court as was customary in the courts of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Wealthy household could hire itinerant teachers to instil wisdom into their children. (Sir 51:23) In the Teaching of Amenemope wisdom was taught in the courts of Egypt and there were "wise men" within the court of Solomon. The references to the "Proverbs of Solomon" (Prov. 10:1) and the activities of the "men of Hezekiah" (25:1) in addition to the existence of Proverbs referring to the king all appear to point to presence of wise men within the Royal Court (1 Kgs 4:2-19). The close relationship between Egypt and Israel during the reign of Solomon is well established as is the size of Solomon's royal court.

29. Virgins in the Book of Isaiah

The Book of Isaiah is set in the Iron II period. Isaiah marks the mother of the royal household as a living calendar. Her pregnancy will count off the days remaining until Ahaz’s execution. In this second pantomime, Isaiah identifies the silent action of another by drawing attention to the pregnancy of Immanuel’s mother and the silent growth of her child. The actor in the pantomime is not Isaiah, but the woman, who silently proceeds with her pregnancy.

The Hebrew word for “virgin” or “young woman” identified the mother of the royal household with the land of Judah (Isa 7:14). The land delivers the harvest that Yahweh promised to Abraham and Sarah, and the mother of the royal household delivers the children. The titles that the Hebrews use for the land of Judah are also the titles that they use for the mother of the royal household. They refer to the land of Judah as a “virgin,” and they refer to the mother of the royal household as a “virgin.”

Here the label “virgin” is a label of shame. It identifies a land and the mother of its royal household as infertile. They are shamed, unclean, or impure because they have no harvest, and because they have no children. The harvest and the children of Judah are divine gifts, not human works.
The title “Virgin of Judah” is particularly significant to describe Judah between 734 and 732 B.C.E. The harvests of Judah were seized or destroyed by the soldiers of Syria and Israel. These same soldiers disemboweled pregnant women, and smashed the heads of the newborn of Judah against the walls of their homes. Both the fields and the women of Judah were infertile. They were virgins. Likewise, the mother of the royal household is also a woman whose child has been sacrificed. Therefore, she is infertile. She is a virgin.

30. Wine and taxes in the Book of Jeremiah

The setting for the book of Jeremiah is the Iron II period. Some two-thousand L'malekh (English: "belonging to the king") seal impressions found on broken handles from the period have been recovered. These seals identified wine jars as emergency tax payments made by villages like Hebron, Socoh, and Ziph during the reign of Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.E.) when Sennacharib, the great king of Assyria, invaded Judah (701 B.C.E.). Some impressions also included images like the sun with two wings or a scarab beetle with four wings. In a Trial of Judah, Jeremiah directs the attention of his audience to wine makers filling clay jugs with wine. Once the jugs are filled, the wine makers label them with royal seals designating them as part of the tax payment of the village to the king of Judah. Ideally, watching the wine-makers at work should give villagers a sense of security. The wine being jugged completes the payment of their taxes to the rulers of Judah, who in return will protect them from their enemies and maintain a stable economy in which they can profitably farm their fields and herd their livestock. Jeremiah, however, challenges the villagers’ sense of well-being. This wine will not bring them security. It is a wine that will set in motion the destruction of their world. It is not a wine that will celebrate the harvest, but a wine that will make Judah collapse like a drunk. Jeremiah shocks the audience into realizing that they are not watching the beginning of a new season of planting and grazing, but the end of the world as they know it.

31. Marriage Preparation in the Book of Hosea

To avoid infertility in marriage some cultures in Syria-Palestine required that before women and men could marry that they conceive a child with a priest at a sanctuary. Marriageable women and men wore a pendant or a tattoo as an affidavit to their fertility. This rite of preparation for marriage occurred only once, and was different from the ritual intercourse between priests and pilgrims that occurred at the end of the harvest and herding seasons. The book of Hosea labels this marriage preparation as “whoredom” (Hos 1:2), “whoring” (Hos 2:1) or “adultery” (Hos 2:2), and elsewhere in the Bible (Lev 19:29; Prov 7:13, Deut 23:18-19). When the daughter of Jephthah asks her father’s permission to “…bewail her virginity” (Judg 11:37), she may be asking to prepare for marriage even though she will never marry. The practice scandalized Hellenists like Herodotus (484-425 B.C.E.) and Augustine (354-430 C.E.). Augustine considered the practice to be prostitution: ”…the Phoenicians offered the gift of prostituting their daughters, before they married them to husbands”. (De Civilate Dei IV, 10). Gomer was not a prostitute, but a young woman ready for marriage. She had completed the rite of initiation for marriage. Her necklace or tattoo made her easily recognizable. (Jer 3:6; Ezek 16:23) She and Hosea are indicted for “prostitution” or “adultery” because they had acquired their ability to bear children in marriage by their participation in a rite of initiation that regarded children less as a divine gift from the Hebrew perspective, and over-emphasized that children were the result of human ingenuity.

32. Sandals in the Book of Amos

Sandals were the uniform that distinguished landowners, who walked off the land in sandals to mark its boundaries. Sandals were title to land. When landowners mortgaged their property, they surrendered their sandals to creditors as collateral. If they defaulted on their debt, creditors sold the land for which the sandals were the title to recover their investment. Here in the book of Amos
creditors in Israel are ruthless. Instead of extending landowners time to pay, they promptly foreclosed on their land. The creditors auction the land or “sandals,” which their debtors have offered as collateral, in order to recover the value of their loan, which is far less than the land itself is worth.

Yahweh was the creator of land and children. The Hebrews must be careful to acknowledge these prerogatives by never appearing before Yahweh with their feet covered or their genitals uncovered (Deut 28:57; 1 Kgs 15:23; 2 Chr 16:12; Isa 6:2; 7:20; Ruth 3:4–7). Only landowners wore sandals, and the fathers of households uncovered their genitals only when preparing to sire a child.

Melchizedek then certifies that Abraham has fulfilled his covenant obligations, and is eligible to keep his plunder. Abraham, however, magnanimously distributes the spoils to Melchizedek, to his warriors, and to Sodom because to accept goods or land from Sodom would create a conflict of interest and make his household a client of Sodom. Yahweh alone blesses the household of Abraham and Sarah with goods and land. The ruler of Sodom does not bless their household. Therefore, Abraham will not accept a “thread”—rather, movable and manufactured goods such as cloth, or a “sandal thong”—immovable property or land. Landowners walked off the dimensions of their land in sandals, which became their legal title.

33. High Places at Tel Dan

34. at Tel Ashkelon

35. Olive Oil at Tel Miqne (Ekron)

**Diaspora Judaism (586-332 B.C.E.)**

From 586-332 B.C.E. the people of Judah were absorbed into first the Babylonian, and then the Persian Empire. Neither empire reflected a uniquely Jewish world-view, but both empires were cultures of the ancient Near East which was the world of the Bible. At the end of the war between Babylon and Judah (586 B.C.E.) the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and deported the household of David for re-education to Tel Aviv in Babylonia. This deportation is called the “Exile”. Judah was now a backwater province of the Babylonian empire. It would not regain national sovereignty until the time of the Maccabees in the second century B.C.E. The father of the household of David was unable to lead. He was a prisoner of the Babylonians. The Temple of Solomon that had been the omphalos of Judah lay in ruins. The sacrifices that kept the Hebrew cosmos in order stopped. Judah was no longer governed by Jews. This tragedy was more than just a national defeat. Yahweh was the divine patron of Israel. The victory of Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, over Judah could only imply that Marduk, the divine patron of Babylon, was supreme. Israel's military defeat became a crisis of faith.

The Babylonians ruled the ancient Near East for a second time from 626-539 B.C.E. In 560 B.C.E., Cyrus the Great became the king of Persia, a small state to the east of Babylon, and within 30 years had replaced the Babylonian empire with his own. Cyrus also unexpectedly told the Jews that they could return to their homeland. While he was probably motivated primarily by the desire to have someone else rebuild Palestine and to make it a source of income for the Persian Empire, the impact on the Jews was to reinvigorate their faith and stimulate them to reconstruct the Temple in Jerusalem. The Second Temple was completed on the very site of the first Temple in 516 B.C.E. Though Cyrus allowed the Jews freedom to practice their religion, he would not permit them to reestablish the monarchy. Instead, Cyrus sent Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of David, along with other exiles to establish a theocracy with Zerubbabel as High Priest. Over the next 150 years, the province of Yehud flourished as the Jews rebuilt Jerusalem and developed the surrounding areas. The Persians resisted any Jewish efforts to restore the monarchy, but allowed them a high degree of autonomy under the High Priest, whose power was partially checked by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Court, and the Popular Assemblies. This is the setting for the books of Ezra, Nehemiah
and Chronicles. One of the key changes in the history of Judaism was the imposition at this time of a ban on intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. Unlike other peoples in the Persian Empire, the people of Yehud did not disappear through assimilation and intermarriage.

36. Behemoth and Leviathan in the Book of Job

Pharaoh Menes (2920-2858 B.C.E.) was the first pharaoh of the first dynasty of ancient Egypt (2920-2770 B.C.E.). Although Menes was called the “Fighter”, he did not die in battle, but was probably killed in a hunting accident when he was trampled to death by a rampaging hippopotamus. “Behemoth” -- the dangerous hippopotamus of chaos that killed Menes and one of Yahweh’s most fierce creatures in the Book of Job (Job 40:15-24) is, nonetheless, portrayed as the domesticated hippopotamus of cosmos grazing on the plants of the Nile in a popular small blue faience statue in Egypt.

In the Enuma Elish Stories Tiamat is a female sea dragon and the divine patron of the ocean. She is also the mother of all. Her partner is Apsu, the divine patron of the freshwater beneath the Earth. When saltwater and freshwater mix the divine twins – Lahmu and Lahamu are born. In the Book of Job (Job 41:1-34) this “Leviathan”, like Behemoth, is one of Yahweh’s fiercest creatures.

37. Temples in the Book of Ezekiel

Neither Eden nor the City of Immanuel is a wilderness. Both are urban habitats. The Story of the ‘Adam as a Farmer says little about the architecture of Eden, whereas the book of Ezekiel describes the City of Immanuel in great detail. Both stories emphasize that the city is well irrigated and lavishly gardened (Gen 2:8–17; Ezek 47:1–12). Throughout, the city that Yahweh is building is contrasted with the palace and temple that the household of David built.

Ezekiel has a bird’s-eye view of the city, which the guide describes in only two dimensions, length and width. The tradition is a verbal blueprint. Although the book of Ezekiel indict the household of David, whose political policies precipitated the war between Babylon and Judah, it does admire the architectural accomplishments of the household. For example, the City of Immanuel will have gates constructed in the same pattern as those that the rulers of Israel and Judah installed at Hazor, Gezer, and Megiddo, when those cities were renovated for use as administrative centers (Ezek 40:5–16).

Hellenistic Judaism (332 B.C.E.-610 C.E.)

After Alexander of Macedonia (336-323 B.C.E.) conquered Syria-Palestine the people of Judah were welcomed into Hellenistic culture as teachers, as advisers, and as interpreters of dreams. When Hellenistic culture began to discriminate against Jews, however, they declared that Hellenism would be destroyed by the “Ancient One” (Dan 7:9). In 610 C.E. the forty-year old Muhammad heard Allah’s voice order him: “Recite!” Until he died in Medina in 632 Muhammad continued to have revelations. The Qur’an is the record of those revelations. Thus, the influence of the Hellenistic culture of Greece and Rome in the world of the Bible came to an end – replaced by the indigenous Semitic culture of Islam.

38. Circumcision in the Stories of Samson

Semites like the Egyptians and the Hebrews in Eastern Mediterranean cultures circumcised their sons; Hellenists like the Philistines, the Greeks and the Romans did not. For Semites circumcision “pruned” males like grapevines, and prepared them for a fertile harvest of children. For Hellenists circumcision was a sacrilege that defaced God’s most perfect creation – the male body.

39. Vegetarians in the Book of Daniel
Diet was a major difference between the people of Judah and the Greeks. Pigs had been domesticated during the Neolithic period (8500–4300 B.C.E.) in this part of the world. By the Bronze Age (3300–1200 B.C.E.), however, they were herded only in villages with good rainfall, which could produce enough grain for both the pigs and the villagers. Initially, pigs were moved out of the mainstream food chain for economic reasons. They competed too strongly with humans for water and grain. Furthermore, centralized urban economies could not easily store, transport, and divide pork for redistribution. Pigs were reintroduced into Syria-Palestine by the Philistines (1200–1000 B.C.E.), and then by the Greeks (332 B.C.E.–640 C.E.).

40. An “Abomination of Desolation” in the Book of Daniel

Antiochus Epiphanes IV (175-164 B.C.E.), the Greek ruler of Syria-Palestine, inaugurated the endtime by granting Jerusalem the status of a polis city and celebrating the event by erecting a statue of Zeus, an “abomination of desolation” (Dan 11:31) in the House of Yahweh.

41. Boats and Whales in the Book of Jonah

Boats first appear at the beginning of the Bronze Age (3000 B.C.E.); sails almost 1500 years later (1500 B.C.E.) Jonah boards the Sea Dragon, the first of two creatures of the deep in the parable. Creation stories in the world of the Bible describe chaos as either the winter storms (Gen 1:1) along the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea or as a sea serpent (Enuma E:132-138; Jonah 1:17). The seaport preacher of Herman Melville (1819-1891) introduces this monster of chaos to American readers as Moby Dick (1851), the great white whale. There are two sea monsters in the Book of Jonah – the ship Sea Dragon that he boards in Joppa, and the Great Fish who teaches Jonah to pray in her womb, and then gives birth to him on the coast of Syria-Palestine.

42. Qumran’s Miqva’ot and Baptism in the Stories of John the Baptizer

Qumran’s elaborate water system with its numerous pools connected by channels is the most striking feature of the site. Although some water was used for drinking, watering animals, and other utilitarian purposes, other pools were Jewish ritual baths (Hebrew miqva’ot). Members of the community immersed themselves in their water to renew their commitment to the covenant. At the time Roland de Vaux (1903–1971) excavated Qumran (1947-1956) little was known about miqva’ot. Much progress has been made in this field since 1995, and teachings on purity and miqva’ot in rabbinic and sectarian Judaism traditions indicate that many of the pools at Qumran were used as miqva’ot reflecting the concern of the Qumran community to remain in good standing with Yahweh in preparation for the imminent end of the world. These teachings also informed the importance of baptism in the New Testament stories of John the Baptist.

43. Meals in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Jesus’ Last Supper

The Manual of Discipline in the Dead Sea Scrolls was a rule of life for the members of the Qumran community. It promised that a messiah would come and celebrate a future, eschatological meal. (iQSa 2.ii-22) In anticipation of these final meals with a messiah who would overthrow the Romans and found a new world order, Jewish end-time communities like the one at Qumran ate regular common meals together. No less than ten members were present. They sat in seniority and the celebrant was a priest. “When the table has been prepared for eating or the new wine for drinking, the priest shall be first to stretch out his hand to bless the first-fruit of the bread and of the wine” (iQS 6.4-6). Blessing the bread first and then the wine follows the order in the blessing of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18) and Jesus’ Last Supper in the New Testament. The messianic character and eschatological associations of these meals as well as the prominence of bread and wine and the fact that they were repeated regularly also recall elements found in the New Testament descriptions of the Lord’s Supper.
44. Destruction of Masada and Armageddon in Revelation

Masada is a plateau more than 1,300 feet above the western shore of the Dead Sea. In 63 B.C.E. Pompey conquered Syria-Palestine. The Romans were ruthless in suppressing revolts throughout the region. Nonetheless, by 66 C.E. the Jews were in full revolt until Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 C.E., sacked the city, destroyed the Temple, and expelled the bulk of the Jewish survivors from the city. Masada, however, held out until 73 C.E.

Between 36-30 B.C.E. Herod the Great (32-6 B.C.E.) had built a wall, battle towers, warehouses, cisterns, barracks and palaces at Masada. At the beginning of the revolt the Sicarii ambushed the Roman garrison at Masada. With Masada as their base they raided both Jews and Romans until 72 C.E. when Flavius Silva marched on Masada with his Tenth Legion. The Romans constructed a ramp from which they breached the casemate wall. Eleazar ben Yair, the Jewish commander, resolved that rather than become Roman slaves, all nine-hundred and sixty men, women and children would commit suicide. The destruction of Jerusalem had been reprised. Masada was an Armageddon.

The city of Megiddo north of the Carmel Mountains was a battleground in every age. Thutmose III (1458-1425 B.C.E.) fought here during the Middle Bronze period, and Pharaoh Neco defeated and then executed Josiah, king of Judah (640-609 B.C.E.) here during the Iron II period. (2 Kgs 23:29-30; 2 Chr 35:22). Thus, Megiddo (Greek: Armagedon) was the site of the final battle between the forces of good and evil in the book of Revelation. (Rev 16:16)

The Jewish War with Rome and the destruction of the Temple was a traumatic event, as the use of the name "Babylon" for Rome shows. That Nero's persecutions were also traumatic as is indicated by the use of Nero redivivus as the eschatological adversary. The enthusiastic performance of the imperial cult in Asia was traumatics from the antithetic parallel drawn between worship of the Christian God and worship of "the beast." Finally, the death of Antipas and the exile of John, the follower of Jesus in Revelation, were events that emphasized the threatened situation of the Christian communities in Asia.

Revelation is shaped by these traumas. A new set of expectations had arisen as a result of faith in Jesus as the Messiah and belief that the kingdom of God had been established. If the risen Jesus was enthroned as the ruler of the kings of the earth, the followers of Jesus should share in that rule and glory. The events just described, however, frustrated those expectations. It was the tension between John's vision of the kingdom of God and his social situation that are expressed in Revelation. The tension is overcome by a revelation of the true, though hidden, state of affairs. God and Jesus do reign in spite of appearances and the Roman Empire is a rule of chaos, not a golden age. It is also overcome by a revelation of the future. In the end, the unjust earthly powers will be judged and the faithful will be rewarded.

Moving On

45. The Future of Archaeology and the Bible

Ashkelon. In the future on-going excavations at Hazor and Megiddo will resolve the issue of both the quality of the fieldwork now being down by archaeologists working in the world of the Bible, and of the historical reliability of the Bible. Large-scale excavations were conducted at Hazor was during 1955-58, and 1968-69 by Yigael Yadin. These excavations were conducted on behalf of the Hebrew University, supported by funding from the Rothschild Foundation. Excavations at Hazor were resumed in 1990, under the direction of Amnon Ben-Tor (Hebrew University). They are a joint project of the Hebrew University, Complutense University of Madrid and the Israel
Exploration Society. Hazor is one of the few sites which the Bible says the Hebrews destroyed that actually was destroyed during the LB period. Likewise, Hazor is one of the three regional capital cities in Israel during the Iron II period. The current excavations want to identify the cause of the LB destruction, and to find the city’s archives containing documents in Hebrew that are not biblical texts.

The Megiddo Expedition is directed by Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin (Tel Aviv University), with Eric Cline (George Washington University) serving as Associate Director (USA). The excavations are a joint project of Tel Aviv University, George Washington University, Loyola Marymount University, Southern California University and Vanderbilt University and the University of Bern (Switzerland). Like Hazor, Megiddo was a regional capital in Israel during the Iron II period. And, like the Hazor excavations, the Megiddo excavations hope to recover the city’s archives and the documents it contains.

Another important excavation is on-going at Tel Rehov.19 Tel Rehov or Rehob is the largest mound in the alluvial Beth-Shean Valley, extending over 26 acres, its summit at an elevation of 116 m below sea level. Located about 6 km west of the Jordan River, 3 km east of the Gilboa ridge and 5 km south of Tel Beth-Shean, Tel Rehov dominates the north–south road through the Jordan Valley. The site comprises an upper mound and a lower mound to its north, each covering about 13 acres. The upper mound rises to 20 m above the surrounding plain, while the lower mound stands about 8 m above the plain. A ravine separates the two mounds. “Rehov” was the name of several cities mentioned in the Bible and other ancient Near Eastern sources. Two cities by that name in the western Galilee are referred to in the city lists of Asher (Josh. 19: 28–30). An Aramean city and state of that name are mentioned in Syria, mainly in relation to David’s conquests (2 Sam 10: 6, 8). However, Rehov in the Beth-Shean Valley is not mentioned in the Bible. The excavations are directed by A. Mazar (Hebrew University). The first six seasons took place between 1997 and 2003. Two excavation areas (A and B and H) were opened on the upper mound, and five (C, D, E, F, G) on the lower mound.

More than a century of intensive exploration and research has produced enough discoveries for another century to study. New discoveries like those from Hazor and Megiddo will continue to strengthen some existing evidence, to challenge some earlier conclusions, and to spawn fresh ideas. Among these new ideas are household archaeology and gender archaeology.

In the future biblical archaeologists will still want to explore change over time in relation to the social, political, and religious history reflected in the Bible, but archaeology of the household will begin to balance the reconstructions of the lives of the rich and famous with an understanding of the lives of ordinary men and women. The significance of a site will no longer drawn from just its powerful, their wars and trade networks or how the site fits in the larger network of the state. The archaeology of the household considers the household, not the palace, as the primary social institution in light of which all artifacts should be read. The household is fundamental because it involves the daily life of every woman and man and because it is the site of the economic production necessary for survival.

The importance of the household is only beginning to make an impact on biblical archaeology. Although some studies of ancient Israel have considered the household they have considered it not as a primary social institution, but as a tertiary social institution in ancient Israel. The state is primary and the village as secondary. Archaeologists have been seduced by the Bible and its importance in Judeo-Christian culture, and consequently use archaeology to trace the large political and economic institutions described in the Bible. Excavations have had an eye to the Bible—to prove it, disprove it, illustrate it, or understand its laws and stories, not with households. Archaeologists working in Syria-Palestine have only recently become concerned with the household level of analysis. 'Their focus has almost never been on the examination of domestic structures and activity areas and the associated artifacts with the intent of reconstructing household dynamics. Rather, archaeologists have focused on the village or city life -- the history of a site, and state life, which can provide insight into regional changes and connections. The household seldom
appears in excavation plans, projects, and publications today.

In the future gender archaeology will also focus biblical archaeology on the lives of women and men whose artifacts emerge from the site. Gender archaeology focuses on what the artifacts tell about the social dynamics of men and women in their households and villages. With artifacts seen as keys to chronology, the humans who used them have often been ignored. Gender archaeology interprets artifacts in a way that is useful for gender studies and for considering the gender of those who used them. Gender archaeology is a commonly used by anthropologists, but is only beginning to appear in biblical archaeology. Anthropologists have shown that gendered use of artifacts can be established with reasonable certainty by using written sources, ethnography and ethnoarchaeology. All of these sources are actually already used in interpreting the data of biblical archaeology on the village and state levels, but they have seldom been combined in the interest of recovering the lives of ordinary women and men. Ethnographic observations provide ideas about the meaning of the household activities with respect to the interactions of women and men and their relationship with other households in the village. What emerges is the kind of day-in-the-life of stories told by Oded Borowski, Daily Life in Biblical Times (2003) and Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, Life in Biblical Israel (2001). These archaeologists not only reconstruct food, health, sickness, hygiene, birth, marriage, death, art and writing in the world of the Bible, but integrate their reconstructions into delightful fictions like “A Day in the Life of the Ahuzam Family” (Borowski 2003: 109-126) and “A Day in Micah’s Household” (King and Stager 2001: 12-20).

The days of biblical archaeology’s exclusive fascination with the lives of rich and powerful is giving way to a new inclusive interest in the faith and vision of ordinary men and women telling, singing, praying, laughing, negotiating, preaching, boasting, loving, remembering, and suffering preserved in the artifacts which the left behind in both tells and texts.

46. Best Books and Articles on Archaeology and the Bible
47. Glossary
48. Internet Links
49. Endnotes
50. Index
“Archaeology” or “achaeology” is the scientific study of cultures through the recovery, reconstruction and interpretation of material remains or artifacts like architecture, pottery, weapons and tools. Archaeology is neither plunder, nor proof-texting nor nor patriotism. The goal of archaeology is to shed light on long-term human activity or culture. The word “culture” comes from “colere” (Latin) meaning “to inhabit”, “to cultivate”, or “to honor”.

The word “archaeology” is a magnet. It draws scholars and students, professionals and amateurs with the promise of traveling from the present into the past and standing at those moments in the human story that made a difference. Archaeology is the Hollywood of ancient Near Eastern studies. The characters are stars gifted with ego, intelligence, courage, wit, instinct; cursed with living a too public life for most academics. The plots range from ordinary and hardworking research to learn the simplest things about yesterday, to alliances between archaeology and the demons of the day.

So where to begin? How best to take the interest of students and general audiences and tour them through this fascinating world?

In the world of the Bible, teaching traditions like Ptah-hotep, Amen-em-ope, the Wise Woman of Proverbs and Joseph in the Book of Genesis begin with the known to teach the unknown. In the 19th and 20th centuries the known for most drawn to the study of the archaeology of Syria-Palestine was the Bible. They wanted to know where these enduring traditions developed. They wanted to know where to find Jericho on a map. (Josh 5:13—6:27) They wanted to know what the wall where the household of Rahab lived looked like. (Josh 2:1-24) They wanted to understand what it meant to be a slave (Exod 1:7-12), and why these ancient people talked with snakes (Gen 2:25—4:2) and gambled with God. (Job 1:1—2:13)

Archaeology today still does not prove the Bible, but the Bible is still a wonderful place to shape the task. The question with which the chapters in Stories and Stones: Archaeology and the Bible begin is: “What can archaeology tell us about the Bible?”

Myth and ritual for many are the defining behaviors of all cultures. As humans we are what we do – ritual; and we are what we say – myth. Archaeology recovers the rituals; the Bible tells the stories.

Ritual is not rote and thoughtless behavior. Ritual is defining behavior. Jews are people who keep Shabbat. Muslims are people who fast during Ramadan. Students are people who read. Americans are people who shower every day.

Myth is not a lie. Myths are the creation stories that define the people who tell them. Christians at the Eucharist tell the story of the night before Jesus died.
Creation stories provide a background for rituals, but they are not simply explanations of the rituals. At the beginning of the 20th century anthropologists thought that creation stories were the way that cultures justified their world views and lifestyle. These stories explained what people in a particular culture did. Creation stories expressed in the language what their rituals expressed in action. Creation stories reflected the world view, the values, of a culture. The creation stories of hunter-gatherer cultures, for example, described the origin of animals and hunting. Stories in farming cultures described how to farm. Stories in herding cultures explained how to herd. Creation stories also presented models of acts and organizations central to a culture’s way of life and related these to primordial times. Creation stories in specific traditions dealt with matters such as harvest customs, initiation ceremonies, and secret societies.

James Frazier (1854-1941) was one of the pioneering thinkers in understanding the relationship of myth and ritual. A British anthropologist, historian of religion and classical scholar, Frazier’s best-known study was The Golden Bough: a study in comparative religion (1890-1915). The Golden Bough traced the evolution of human behavior, ancient and primitive myth, magic, religion, ritual, and taboo. It was named after the golden bough in the sacred grove at Nemi, near Rome.

Frazier argued that creation stories and their rituals provided evidence for the earliest human preoccupation with fertility. He saw human culture developing in stages -- from magic to religion to science -- and these stories and rituals bore witness to early ways of thinking. For Frazier creation stories also explained rituals. Thus, Frazier he argued that Attis castrated himself to explain why his priests castrated themselves.23

Biblical scholars used Frazier’s work to reconstruct the rituals in Hebrew life (German: Sitz im Leben) that biblical traditions explained. S.H. Hooke (1874-1968) applied the Myth and Ritual method to the creation stories of the ancient Near East and reconstructed the rituals for coronations and the akitu New Year that he assumed these stories explained.

Every culture in the ancient Near East shared in a common stock of stories from which they drew and to which they contributed. Ancient Israel was no different. For example, the Hebrews told creation stories like those in the book of Genesis common to the people of Egypt and Mesopotamia (Gen 1--11). The Hebrews told their own unique stories of creation like those in the book of Exodus (Exod 5--15). Hebrew storytellers would have performed these stories, just as storytellers in Babylon performed the Enuma Elish story during the celebration of the New Year (Akkadian: akitu). These creation stories expressed in language what the akitu ritual was enacting through action.

The celebration of the akitu New Year marked the end of the old year and the beginning of a new year. In some cultures, the year began when the first crops were sown, in others when the last harvest was collected.

Some celebrations lasted for eleven days. Each day was celebrated with rituals which evaluated the performance of monarchs during the year which was ending, before authorizing them to continue to rule for the year which was beginning. Some three days were dedicated to
preparations, prayers, singing and sacrifices. Special attention was given to the carving of two small wooden statues laminated with gold and inlaid with gems, which were used in the dramatization of the Enuma Elish stories. One statue may have represented Tiamat, the antagonist in the stories, the other statue may have been Kingu, Tiamat's helper.

On the fourth day of the festival in Babylon, storytellers began the proclamation of the Enuma Elish stories before the statue of Marduk. With the episodes describing the divine assembly recognizing Marduk as the divine lawgiver in return for putting down the revolt of Tiamat, storytellers laid down the qualifications for a monarch in the state.

The temple Esagila in the Enuma Elish stories is both the center (Greek: omphalos) and the model (microcosm) for the new world which Marduk creates, and the blueprint for state temples throughout Mesopotamia. The condition of the temple at the beginning of each year was a measure of the condition of the state under its monarch. Consequently, on the fifth day of the akitu New Year, the temple was thoroughly cleaned. When the statue of Nabu, who ruled the Divine Assembly in Babylon, arrived from the city of Borsippa, monarchs went into the temple. Then the priests (Akkadian: urigallu) stripped them of their royal insignia and tortured them like prisoners of war.

When the priests were satisfied the monarchs had not betrayed their commission to rule justly, they approved their coronation for another year. On the sixth day of the akitu New Year, storytellers carried out the confirmation by telling the conclusion of the Enuma Elish stories. Their words were pantomimed by dancers, who acted out Marduk's victory over Tiamat and Kingu. Tiamat, who leads the revolt against the divine assembly, is slain by Marduk in combat. Kingu commands the warriors of Tiamat during her revolt. He is executed by Marduk, who uses his blood to the thin the clay from which the people primeval are formed. The two small statues prepared during the opening days of the festival were beheaded and burned before a statue of Nabu.

On days seven and eight, representatives from every city in the state arrive with the statues of their divine patrons. Both the human representatives, and the statues of the divine patrons which they escort, come to pay their respects to their monarch, and pledge their allegiance for the coming year. Priests audited the records of each delegation's obligations to the state, just as they had audited the record of its monarch. Only delegations in good standing were allowed to renew their membership in the state.

On the ninth day, the monarch engaged in ritual intercourse (Greek: hieros gamos) to celebrate the covenant between the state and its divine patron. This sacred marriage between a priest who represented the state, and the monarch who represented its divine patron symbolized both the intimacy of the covenant which united the state and its patron, and the fertility which resulted from their relationship.

Then on the tenth day, the monarch and the statue of Marduk led the delegations in procession along a sacred highway leading to the akitu temple on a canal outside of the capital city. Here the first crops would be planted. The participants transported their statues through the fields in wagons and across canals and rivers on barges. It was the climax of the festival. When the entourage arrived at the temple, the monarch showered every city in the state with gifts of gold and silver.
On the eleventh day, the monarch threw a banquet for the representatives from all the cities in the state and their statues. The monarch promulgated the list of officials which would serve the state during the upcoming year. Every state official was either reappointed or replaced. When the banquet was completed, the delegations returned to their own cities. The story of the state had been retold, and the New Year had begun.

Today, archaeologists still consider the relationship between story and ritual to be important, they no longer assume that every creation story developed to explain some human activity in the world of the Bible. Likewise, archaeologists do not assume that rituals always came first, and then stories subsequently developed to explain them.

Annales Archaeology

Until the appearance of the Annales School, archaeology chronicled the lives of the rich and famous. “Monumental” or “museum” archaeology sought to footnote the accomplishments of strong men who built the ancient world. It was an exercise in patriarchal history. It told “his” story.

The Annales School was founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in 1929, while they were teaching at the University of Strasbourg. Marc Léopold Benjamin Bloch (1886-1944) was a historian of medieval France between the First and Second World Wars. Born at Lyon, the son of the professor of ancient history, Gustave Bloch, Marc studied at the Ecole Normale and Foundation Thiers in Paris, then at Berlin and Leipzig. He was in the infantry in World War I and won the Legion of Honor. Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) was a French historian. Febvre was influenced early on by Vidal de la Blanche during his time at the Ecole Normale Superieure (1899-1902) and earned his doctorate in history in 1911 after submitting a thesis “Phillip the Second and the Franche-Comté”. He took a position at the University of Dijon.

The Annales School is best known for incorporating social scientific methods into history. It combined geography, history, and the approaches of L’Annee Sociologique, a journal of sociology founded in 1898 by Emile Durkheim. The School rejected the predominant emphasis on politics, diplomacy and war of many 19th century historians. Instead, they studied long-term historical structures (French: la longue durée) in place of historical events. Geography, material culture, and what later Annalistes called “mentalities” or the psychology of epochs.

Bloch died during WWII and Febvre carried on the work of the Annales School. Febvre’s most famous student was Fernand Braudel (1902-1985). He was born in France, then, in 1923, he went to Algeria to teach history. He was a historian who revolutionized the 20th century study of the discipline by considering the effects of economics and geography on global history.

Returning to France in 1932, Braudel met Lucien Febvre, who was to have a great influence on his work. In 1939, he joined the army but was captured in 1940 and became a prisoner of war in Germany, in a camp near Lübeck, where, working from memory, he put together his great work. Braudel's work came to define a second era of the Annales School (1960-1980).
Historians like Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Jacques Le Goff continue to use the methods of the Annales School in their work. The most noted work of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (1929-) is *Montaillou, Village Occitan*, a study of one village in Languedoc during the period of the Cathars Christianity (1050-1321). He uses the meticulous notes of a member of the Inquisition to study the layers of peasant life in this village over the course of several years.

During the 1990s a number of archaeologists working in the world of the Bible adopted the Annales method.24 The work of Lawrence Stager (Harvard University), for example, shows how the method can be profitably applied to the study of ancient Israel. Likewise, Thomas E. Levy (University of California at San Diego) assembled thirty archaeologists to use the Annales method to describe *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*.25

The Annales method appeals to some archaeologists of Syria-Palestine because it stresses generalization and broad insights that go beyond an examination of individual historical events described in the Bible. Furthermore, the Annales method calls for interdisciplinary collaboration with all the disciplines concerned with human culture -- economics, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and the natural sciences.26 This kind of interdisciplinary cooperation is familiar to archaeologists, who themselves use a wide range of disciplines to analyze and interpret their excavations.

The Annales method also assumes that different human activities in the same culture develop at different speeds. Some archaeologists of Syria-Palestinian assume each level of their excavation came to an abrupt halt at one frozen moment in time. On the contrary, any stratum usually reflects an accumulation of human activities repeated in the same place at different times. No one ever saw a stratum in antiquity the way that the archaeologists see it today.

Biblical archaeology tries to find evidence for specific events described in the Bible. The Annales method tries to provide a more generalized picture of human activity. Annales archaeologists emphasize problem oriented research strategies. They define research questions, and then test the accuracy of their reconstructions. They try to determine the time period during which certain activities like farming, herding, pottery making, took place, and how long it took for these activities to develop and then to change.

Cultural and Economic Archaeology

Some archaeologists use economic theories to study culture. The cultural and economic method combines the approaches of anthropology and history to look at the way the rituals and stories in popular culture interpret historical events. These archaeologists focus on how the rituals and stories of the powerless such as carnival, festival, theater and fiction interpret events and movements such as nationalism. Cultural histories consider adaptations of traditional culture to mass media, from print to film and, now, to the Internet.

Processual Archaeology

Processual Archaeology was developed by Gordon R. Willey (Harvard University) and Phillip Phillips (-1994), *Method and Theory in American Archeology* (1958).27 Wiley and
Phillips argued that the goals of archaeology were the same as the goals of anthropology. Both disciplines studied humans and human activity. Their work was a critique of cultural and economic studies that assumed any information about past people and past cultures were lost once artifacts entered the archaeological record, and that all archaeologists should do with artifacts was to catalogue, describe, and use them to create timelines.

Processual Archaeology claimed that, with the rigorous use of the scientific method it was possible to get past the limitations of the archaeological record and begin to learn something about how the people who used the artifacts actually lived. Lewis Binford was the first to champion processual archaeology. He argues that archaeology should not just describe the past, it should explain it. Binford did not want to only know the "what" but also the "why." The task of processual archaeology is to abstract from artifacts the world view of the people who created them. The goal of processual archaeology is to get back to the people behind the artifacts.

Processual archaeology assumes cultural evolution. Culture takes the place of biological adaptation as a means of adapting to an environment. Processual archaeologists assume that cultural change happens in a predictable framework that can be understood by the analysis of its components. Moreover, since that framework is predictable then science is the key to unlocking how those components interacted with the cultural whole. For processual archaeologists cultural changes are driven by evolutionary processes, which are not only understandable, but also scientifically predictable once the variables are understood.

There was no existing method for doing processual archaeology. Therefore, archaeologists developed a variety of completely new methods for analyzing artifacts. Different archaeologists developed different methods for during processual work.

Lewis Binford argued that ethnohistory was necessary to facilitate an understanding of archaeological context. Ethnohistory involves living and studying the lives of those that would have used the artifacts or at least a similar culture. Binford, for example, wanted to prove that the Mousterian artifacts from Ice Age France were adapted to their environment. Therefore, Binford spent time with the Nunamiut people of Alaska, who lived in an Ice Age climate. Binford had a good deal of success with this approach.

During the late 1960s and into the 1970s, archaeologist Kent Flannery began championing the idea that systems theory could be used in archaeology to study culture. Systems theory works well when trying to describe how elements of a culture interact, but appears to work poorly when describing why they interact the way that they do. Nevertheless, systems theory has become a very important part of Processual Archaeology, and is perhaps the only way archaeologists can examine other cultures without interference from their own cultural biases.

Post-Processual Archaeology

In the United States today most archaeologists are processual. They are anthropologists. In Europe, however, most archaeologists are post-processual.
Post-processual Archaeology developed from post-modernism. Post-modernism is an artistic, architectural, philosophical, and cultural movement that developed as a reaction to modernism. Whereas modernism frames itself as the culmination of the Enlightenment's quest for a definitive understanding of aesthetics, ethics, and learning, post-modernism considers the ideals or “meta-narratives” of aesthetics, ethics and learning to have been compromised in western European cultures. Modernism claims to have the answer. Post-modernism argues that only an answer is possible. Post-modernism is suspicious of the meta-narratives or creations stories of any culture. It denies the existence of universal values or ideals and encourages fractured, fluid and multiple perspectives marked by an increasing importance in the ideas from the sociology of knowledge.

The post-processual method is a “method” only in the loosest sense of the word. Processual archaeologists did not all use the same method, but they had a common goal: to excavate scientifically. In contrast the post-processual archaeologists have diverse goals. Some are Marxists, some are feminists, some reconstruct common world views, some want to reconstruct the social worlds to which excavations belonged. These are very different goals. What post-processual archaeologists have in common is their critique of processual method. For post-processual archaeologists, processual archaeology is too positivist a method of studying culture. Like post-modernism, post-processualism’s reconstructions of cultures are much more relative.

Positivism assumes that philosophy should be as rigorous as science. Philosophy should provide strict criteria for judging what is true and what is false. The most characteristic claim of positivism asserts that statements are meaningful only insofar as they are verifiable, and that statements can be verified only in two ways: empirical statements, including scientific theories, which are verified by experiment and evidence; and analytic truth, statements which are true or false by definition, and so are also meaningful. Everything else, including ethics and aesthetics, is not verifiable.

The name “post-processualism” was coined by Ian R. Hodder (Stanford University). The first connotation of post-processualism is a reference to post-modernism, its parent theory; the second is that post-processualism is the natural result of processualism. Hodder's fieldwork involves excavating of the 9,000 year-old Neolithic site of Catalhoyuk in central Turkey. He has endeavored to explore the effects of post-processual approaches on method in archaeology which includes providing each excavator with the opportunity to record his or her own individual interpretation of the site.

Critics of post-processual archaeology argue that it does not verify its reconstructions by experiments in the field, and therefore is not a truly scientific discipline. Post-processual archaeologiststs counter that since theories on cultural change cannot be independently verified experimentally then what is considered true is simply what seems the most reasonable to archaeologists as a whole. Since archaeologists are not perfectly objective then the conclusions they reach will always be influenced by personal biases. An example of how easily bias can inform science is the patriarchal assumptions that dominated archaeology until the latter half of
During the **Late Bronze period (1550-1200 B.C.E.)** people in the panhandle of Syria-Palestine abandoned large cities (50+ acres) inland in the hills and migrated to unfortified smaller cities (-12 acres) dominated by Egypt along the coast. Population declined. The rich were very rich, and the poor were very poor. Sanctuary architecture was diverse. International trade increased. An alphabet replaced picture-writing. ‘Apiru mercenaries terrorized governors loyal to Pharaoh Akhenaten (1353-1335 B.C.E.), and Pharaoh Merneptah (1224-1214 B.C.E.) conquered Ashkelon, Gezer, Yanoam and Israel!

The Death of the Firstborn of Egypt (Exod 1:7—13:16) and the Creation of the Firstborn of Israel (Exod 13:17—Num 27:11) are set in the Late Bronze period, although they appear in the Bible as they were told in the Iron II period (1150-587 B.C.E) when Israel built a fort near the largest and most plentiful spring in the Sinai at Kadesh Barnea, which is prominent in the stories.
a reconstruction of the past. While some post-processualists argue that any understanding of the past is impossible most believe that, if nothing else, archaeology needs to struggle to keep concerns about the bias of archaeologists constantly in mind. Both wish to eliminate this bias and come to an objective understanding of the reality of the past, however they different very significantly in how to best achieve this end.

**Biblical Archaeology**

William F. Albright (1891-1971) pioneered the study of archaeology and the Bible with his excavations at Gibeah (Arabic: *Tell el-Ful*) in 1922-1923+1933, Bethel in 1927 and Kirjath-sepher (Arabic: *Tell Beit Mirsim*) in 1926-1932. Biblical archaeology, for Albright, was the integration of field work with biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies. Although his integration of text and tell influenced more than a generation of Israeli and American scholars, Albright’s most significant students were George E. Wright and John Bright.

**William F. Albright (1891-1971)**
**Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore)**

G. Ernest Wright (1909-1974) was a leading biblical archaeologist, especially skilled in the study and dating of pottery. Wright was a staunch defender of the relevance of Old Testament study to the Christian faith. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister and received his B.A. from the College of Wooster, Ohio. He received his Bachelor of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary (1934), the same year he was ordained in the Presbyterian church. He studied with William Foxwell Albright at Johns Hopkins University, where he received his M.A. (1936) and PhD. (1937). He taught Old Testament History and Theology at McCormick Seminary (1939-1958), and then became Parkman Professor (1958-1974) and Curator of the Semitic Museum (1961-1974) at the Harvard Divinity School. His publications include: *God Who Acts, Biblical Theology as Recital* (1952); *Biblical Archaeology* (1957); *Shechem, Biography of a Biblical City* (1965); and *The Old Testament and Theology* (1969). He directed the Drew-McCormick Archaeological Expedition to Shechem (1956-1974); the Hebrew Union College Biblical and Archaeological School Expedition at Tell Gezer (1964-1965); and the Joint American Expedition to Idalion, Cyprus (1971-1974).


**John Bright**
**(-1995)**
**Union Theological Seminary, Virginia**
Books on archaeology and the Bible published from 1950-1970, like *Archaeology of Palestine* (1949) by William F. Albright, *Achaeology in the Holy Land* (1960) by Kathleen Kenyon and *The Achaeology of the Land of Israel* (1982) by Yohanan Aharoni, use archaeology to demonstrate the historical accuracy of the Bible. Archaeology, for Albright, could not prove Israel’s faith, but archaeology could demonstrate that Israel’s faith was not mindless superstition. These works are political histories of Syria-Palestine, highlighting ancient Israel, that refine the time line and significant events identified in the Bible with archaeology. These archaeologists accept the biblical traditions as reliable reflections of past events and their relationships with one another.

Kenneth A. Kitchen
University of Liverpool


In *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* Kitchen is not doing the kind of careful reconstruction of the world of the Bible that distinguished his careful reconstruction of the world of ancient Egypt. Instead the work angrily targets the positions of Niels P. Lemche (University of Copenhagen), Thomas Thompson (University of Copenhagen), Philip Davies (University of Sheffield), Keith Whitelam (University of Sheffield), Israel Finkelstein and, to some extent, William Dever (University of Arizona), who consider the Bible to have developed by Jews attempting to avoid assimilation into the Hellenistic culture that Alexander of Macedonia (356-323 B.C.E.), brought to the ancient Near East. For them the traditions in the Bible created an identity for Hellenized Jews, but had little or no historical content. Therefore, this school of biblical interpretation is called “biblical minimalism”.

*Alexander of Macedonia (356-323 B.C.E.)*

*The Israelites* by B.S.J. Isserlin (1998) is a more recent history of ancient Israel that uses archaeology and the Bible to explain Israel’s origins and political organization as well as the larger issues like the geography of Syria-Palestine especially between 1150-586 B.C.E. Like *The History of Ancient Palestine* by Gosta Ahlstrom (1994) and *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* edited by Michael D. Coogan (2001), *The Israelites* follows the outline of classics like *A History of Israel* by John Bright (1959-1981) and *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* by J. Maxwell Miller and John Hayes (1986). These more recent histories are more sophisticated in their use of archaeology to reconstruct village planning, architecture, agriculture, crafts, industry, trade, warfare, language and art in ancient Israel.

One focused study of the social world of the Bible is Life in Biblical Israel by Philip J. King (Boston College) and Lawrence E. Stager (Harvard University) Life in Biblical Israel (2001) is a well organized and well written handbook to the social world of ancient Israel. There are more than 200 high quality color and black and white illustrations, photographs, maps, architectural plans, and site reconstructions.

John C. H. Laughlin (Averett University) has excavated at Tel Dan, Capernaum and Banias. His Archaeology and the Bible is “…concerned with field archaeology as it is practiced in the Near East …and its implications for reading and understanding the Bible.” The book offers a history of archaeology and an introduction to field work. Laughlin then surveys what archaeologists have learned about the cultures of the Neolithic period (8500-2000 B.C.E.), the Middle Bronze period (2000-1550 B.C.E.), the Late Bronze period (1550-1200 B.C.E.), the Iron I period (1200-1000 B.C.E.) and Iron II period (1000-550 B.C.E.), and, especially, how the understanding of these cultures has changed during the 20th century. Laughlin has written a good first book to familiarize students with vocabulary, basic concepts and significant events, promising “…to interrelate the data now known through archaeological discovery with the world and text of the Hebrew Bible….” Laughlin takes inventory of the talking points that have developed between archaeologists and biblical scholars.

Household and Gendered Archaeology

Household or gendered archaeology focuses on households in Syria-Palestine as they develop and change during the Iron Age (1200-587 B.C.E.). Meyers assumes that these households throughout Syria-Palestine were socially and economically similar, and that their development was consistent. The volatile politics of Israel and Judah did not seriously interrupt the need for their households to farm and herd. Meyers also assumes that even when Israel developed from a decentralized, subsistent and village culture to a centralized, surplus and city culture, the economics of households were not significantly changed.

Reconstructing the household in Syria-Palestine is not an easy task. Until recently archaeologists have had little interest in either the household or the role of women in the world of the Bible. The Bible itself focuses on the lives of the rich and famous, not on the poor and ordinary. The time between when the Bible today took shape and the events that the Bible describes makes it unlikely that even when the Bible describes households and women that it does so with accuracy or balance.

During the 20th century archaeologists generally ignored the household, and instead concentrated on cities, fortifications, palaces, temples, weapons, ceramics, precious stones and metals used by powerful males. The archaeology of ancient Israel has been committed to describing how the Hebrews developed first the village culture, and then the state culture
Ethnobiology studies the relationship between a culture and its environment. Synchronic describes phenomena or events that occur at the same time or within a defined period of time, but not necessarily at the same place. Diachronic describes phenomena or events that occur at different times, but not necessarily at different places.

The Bible itself does not make up for what is missing about households and women in archaeological writings. Ancient sources are not always more reliable witnesses to the social world of the Bible that the silent witness of artifacts. Artifacts have no voice, but they also have no bias. The most striking bias in the Bible is its communities of origin. For the most part, the Bible contains the traditions of elite males -- priests, prophets, monarchs. Whether archaeologists are dealing with the bias or biblical traditions or the lack of bias in artifacts, the obstacles they encounter in reconstructing the world the Bible describes are significant.

Moreover, the Bible today developed long after events it describes. Therefore, it seldom provides accurate, systematic, or complete records of the daily lives of ordinary people.

Nonetheless, by using a creative mix of disciplines and reliable social scientific models it is still possible to understand both the Bible and archaeology better. As has become increasing clear a better balance must be maintained that will study not only the lives of the powerful, but the lives of the powerless – not only cities, but villages, not only palaces but households, not only men but women.

Yesterday, archaeology was more interested in the lives of the rich and famous. Today, inspired by the engendering of archaeology by women’s studies, archaeology is more interested in what artifacts can teach about the daily lives of ordinary human beings. Essentialist or palace archaeology focused on the power and prominence of elite males – priests, prophets, warriors, rulers. The archaeology of gender or archaeology of the household contests these long held and essentialist stereotypes that the way to understand a culture is to understand its elite males, and, instead, focuses on the less dramatic, but no less significant, roles of ordinary men and women – mothers, fathers, midwives, widows, elders, teachers, slaves, herders, farmers.

Phyllis Trible and Phyllis A. Bird were pioneers in the gendering of archaeology and biblical studies. Bird proposed using an historical method to learn from the Bible about the actual lives and experiences of Hebrew women. Trible proposed a literary method to learn from female characters in the Bible about attitudes toward women in ancient Israel.

To engender archaeology and biblical studies requires a paradigm shift. “Paradigms” or “hermeneutics” are the frameworks within which scholars pose their questions.
Phenomenology observes and collects material and psychological data – artifacts and visions, for example -- in order to understand the world view of a culture as that culture understood itself.

Emic or native interpretations of the rituals, symbols and myths of a culture are provided by the members of a culture. They are the interpretations of insiders.

Etic interpretations are provided by observers of a culture. They are the interpretations of outsiders.

Emic and etic interpretations bring different resources to the understanding of any world view. One is not more accurate than the other.

Engendering archaeology returns to the historical method proposed by Bird. Carol Meyers (Duke University) is pioneering the use of archaeology, sociology, ethnography and comparative ancient Near Eastern studies to understand the daily lives of men and women and their experiences in the world of the Bible especially in her work on the role of women in weaving and baking.

"Households" in the world of the Bible are not "families". Households and families are distinct social institutions. Some members of households are blood kin, some are not. Households are communities of covenant or choice, not of kinship or blood.

Likewise, households are not "houses". The pillared house common throughout Syria-Palestine during the Iron Age (1200-587 B.C.E.) is one of the artifacts of a household, but it is not the household. The configuration of the pillared house contributes to the understanding of the household and how it works, just as do mills, looms, pottery, tools and other artifacts.

Households exercise political, economic, diplomatic, legal and educational authority in ancient Israel. Political power is the ability to feed and protect the members of a group. Economic power is the ability to have a child and have a harvest. Diplomatic power is the ability to tell friends from enemies. Legal power is the ability to resolve conflicts. And educational power is the ability to pass on experience from one generation to the next. Stable households not only exercise this authority for their own members, but also exercise it for the common good of the other households in their village and tribe as well.

In households, human activity is never just male activity. Households are social institutions where women as well as men exercise authority. Generally only men are authorized to fight, to rule and to lead worship outside the households. Inside households, however, women were present in approximately the same proportions as men. Archaeologists who pay attention to household artifacts lead much about the political, economic, diplomatic, legal and educations roles of women.

The activities of women and men in households are not identical. Cooperation and interdependence require that women and men perform different tasks. Although women, men
and children all work together at activities like harvesting, most household activities are assigned to either women or to men, but not to both. Gender is always a factor in the assignment of household responsibilities.

Discrete household activities take place in gendered spaces. Certain places in households are used exclusively by either women or by men. There is also common space in households like eating space used by both women and men together. The association of certain spaces with one gender or the other is physically recognizable. Women map their assigned space differently than men, and those arrangements can be identified by archaeologists. Households defined by women’s experience (Gen 24:28; Ruth 1:8; Song 3:4; 8:2) are called the “household of the mother” (Hebrew: bet ‘em). Households defined by men’s experience are called the “household of the father” (Hebrew: bet ‘ab) in biblical texts rooted in women's experiences.

Household activities are group activities. Women work together and men work together. Therefore, these activities create important social relationships relevant for more than simply getting the job done. While grinding flour older women teach younger women not just the job of baking bread, but also how to deal with the men and the children they feed.

Conclusions

The world of the Bible comprised at least four different worlds: Israel as Villages (1200-1000 B.C.E.), Israel as States (1000-587 B.C.E.), Diaspora Judaism (587-333 B.C.E.) and Hellenistic Judaism (333 B.C.E.-622 C.E.) Myth and Ritual Archaeology, Annales Archaeology, Cultural and Economic Archaeology, Processual Archaeology, Post-Processual Archaeology Biblical Archaeology and Household Archaeology each continue to contribute to understanding these worlds of the Bible, and the traditions that developed in those worlds. The chapters in Stories and Stones: Archaeology and the Bible will demonstrate how these different methods of studying stone enriches the understanding of hearing the words.

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From prehistory to the Muslim conquest of the 7th century C.E., embracing the diverse lands at the meeting point of three continents, the Ancient Near East and Egypt occupies a vastly influential position in world archaeology and ancient history, art, culture and religion. Although annually the scene of multiple excavations, archaeology in Israel is currently poorly documented on the internet. AncientNearEast.net is a gateway to those excavations with web sites. The Hebrew University Research Center and The Dinur Center for Jewish History also maintain a list of links to archaeological excavations relating to Jewish History.
The Stories of Elijah portray the prophet as a champion of the Natufian way of life. They contrast the values of this decentralized, subsistence, village culture with the centralized, surplus, city culture ruled by Ahab and Jezebel. For the Stories of Elijah the people of Yahweh can survive only in villages, not in cities.

Sacred Centers

The Natufian culture developed at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea just before the end of the Pleistocene era (10,300-8,500 B.C.E.). It was a unique Stone Age culture whose villages, farming and hunting techniques were the prototypes of both the cities of the Neolithic period (8,500-4,300 B.C.E.) and the agriculture that supported them. Abundant resources due to a favorable warming climate that followed the end of the Ice Age originally allowed the Natufians to settle permanent villages where they hunted, fished and gathered wild cereals. Their villages and camps have been excavated at Tell Abu Hureyra, Mureybat and Yabrud III in Syria, Hayonim Terrace, Ain Mallaha, Beidha, Ein Gev, Hayonim Nahal Oren, Mugharet el Wad, Shuqba and Salibiya I in Israel; Jericho in Palestine; Jiita III, Borj el-Barajné, Saaidé and Aamiq II in Lebanon. From this homeland in Syria-Palestine the Natufians traded abroad for obsidian from Anatolia, shellfish from the Nile Valley, and for malachite-beads.

Smaller camps were used for hunting and foraging. For example, the Valley Cave (Arabic: Mugharet el Wad) is the largest of the Mount Carmel caves. A few Natufian households used both the Valley Cave and the broad terrace in front of it as a hunting and gathering camp.

In their more permanent villages the Natufians dug their houses into the ground on a stone foundation. Above ground the huts were shaped with light wood and brush. No trace of the mud bricks characteristic of the Neolithic period has been found. These round houses were 9-18 ft in diameter with a round or rectangular fire pit in the center.

Above the ground Natufian houses may have looked like the crannog, a dwelling found along lakesides in Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Crannogs were roundhouses of wood and bracken supported on stilts driven into the lake bed built after 3000 B.C.E.. Sometimes in place of stilts tons of rock were piled onto the lake bed to make an island foundation for the crannog. Several hundred crannog sites have been identified but only a few have been excavated.
Natufian villages covered some 0.2 acres or an area of 30x30 yards. These villages housed 100-150 people.

**Drought Motif**

A major climate change occurred in Syria-Palestine around 8,000 B.C.E. This Younger Dryas Cooling was a 1,000-year-long interruption in the warming temperatures across Syria-Palestine creating a severe drought. During the drought the level of the Mediterranean Sea rose, and the coastline stabilized to its present contours. The Coastal Plain became narrower and was covered by sparse forest and grasslands, with swamps in low lying areas.

The Younger Dryas destroyed the wild cereals, legumes, almonds, acorns, pistachios and cereals gathered by the Natufians, who reacted by clearing scrub and planting seeds.\(^62\)

Gordon Hillman (University College London) has spent over 20 years investigating the remains of ancient food plants at a unique site at Abu Hureyra, in the middle Euphrates. Seeds at Abu Hureyra survived because they had been accidentally charred in house fires before they were buried. They are the oldest cultivated seeds recovered by archaeologists.

Wild seed varieties gathered as food gradually vanished at Abu Hureyra, before the cultivated varieties appeared. Those wild seeds most dependent on water were the first to die out, followed one by one by the more hardy ones. This was a clue as to why the hunter-gatherer people turned to cultivating some of the foods they had previously collected from the wild. The wild grasses and seeds that the people relied on for food died out, and they were forced to start cultivating the most easily-grown of them in order to survive.

The Natufians did not irrigate their crops. They took wild seeds and sowed them where natural soil moisture allowed them to germinate and grow. Wild stands of these cereals could not have continued to grow unaided in such locations because they would have been overgrown by native scrub. Therefore, these first farmers had to clear the competing vegetation.

To harvest and process their crops the Natufians developed a microlithic technology using microburin technique to produce short blades or microliths shaped as lunates, trapezes and triangles. A “microlith” is a small stone tool, typically knapped of flint or chert. Microliths were either produced from small blades or microblades, or made by snapping normal big blades in a controlled manner, which leaves a very typical piece of waste or microburin. The latter type of microliths are called “geometric microliths”. They can be formed as various kinds of triangles, lunate shaped or trapezes. The shape of the microlith can be used for dating. Some types of microliths, like trapezes, were used in the Neolithic period. Microliths were also produced during the Mesolithic or Epipaleolithic period for use as barbs on arrows, spears and other tools.\(^63\)

Sickle blades appear for the first time in the Natufian period. The characteristic sickle-gloss shows that they have been used to cut the silica-rich stems of cereals and form an indirect proof for early agriculture. They also made stone mortars, grinders and storage pits.
The Younger Dryas also killed the great animals of the Pleistocene era -- mammoths, mastodons, giant bison, and ground sloths. Therefore the Natufians began to hunt smaller game. Archaeologists have recovered stone shaft straighteners or planes for smoothing and leveling the wood shafts for arrows which indicates that the Natufians had bows and arrows. Shaft straighteners are grooved stones that were heated for use in bending and straightening dart and arrow shafts.

Hunters worked in groups snaring their prey with nets, driving their prey over cliffs, or into killing pens. Two types of gazelle were popular with the Natufians, as well as deer, wild cattle, boar, asses and ibex. Water fowl and freshwater fish were hunted in the Jordan Valley.

The proportion of gazelle, deer or antelope bones at a site is a measure of the role that hunting played in the economy. Before animals were domesticated at Jericho between 8500-7500 B.C.E., for example, 37% of the meat consumed was gazelle. Less than 18% of the meat consumed at Jericho between 7500-6000 B.C.E. after animals were domesticated was gazelle. Between 2000-1550 B.C.E. only 3.4% of meat consumed was gazelle.

The principal method of hunting gazelle involved use of large triangle-shaped corrals into which the gazelle would be driven. During the 1920’s air mail pilots named these structures “kites”. Natufians built one large kite around the Azraq Oasis, on the boundary between the bush steppe and the black basalt desert, just west of the village of Azraq Duruz.

The kite head was a pit several hundred yards in circumference enclosed by a natural stone wall. Walls one or two miles long diverged from this corral. They formed the "tails" of the kite head. The tail walls were often one or two stones high.
Although far too low to serve as real barriers, gazelle avoided these low walls rather than jumped them.

The gazelle would be herded between the widely separated tails, and then driven toward the head of the kite usually situated just beyond a slight rise and out of sight. Around the corral and along the tails were blinds or “hides” where hunters waited.67 Trapped in the head of the kite they would be slaughtered.

In a lament in the Book of Psalms (Ps 140:12 Heb/Ps 104:11 Eng) mourners beg Yahweh to hunt their enemies like gazelle into a kite corral (Hebrew: mad-hepa).68

Complaint
Those who surround me wag their heads;

Petition
Let their lies overwhelm them!
Let burning coals fall on them!

Let them be flung into pits like gazelle, no more to rise!
Do not let liars rule the land;
Let death hunt down the violent like gazelle into traps (Hebrew: mad-hepa)

Lament (Ps 140:0-11)

The Natufians used animal bones to make harpoons and fish-hooks. Stone and bone were worked into pendants and other ornaments. Ostrich egg shells were turned into containers. There are a few human figurines made of limestone, but the favorite subject was the gazelle.

Uterus Graves
The Natufians buried their dead in pits using abandoned houses in their villages as cemeteries. Bodies were laid on their backs or on their sides in the fetal position. These bodies are not oriented in any particular direction. They filled the pits with debris, and sometimes marked the graves with a limestone slab. **Natufian Necklace**

**Israel Museum**  
10,300–8500 B.C.E.  
Bone and Stone  
Valley Cave, Carmel Mts.

There are both single and multiple Natufian burials. The rate of child mortality is high. In the Hayonim Cave, in Nahal Oren and at Ain Mallaha skulls of the dead were removed from their bodies.

**Fetal Burial with Shell Crown**  
Israel Museum  
10,300–8,500 B.C.E.  
Bone and Shell  
Valley Cave, Carmel Mts.

Jewelry is not only a personal accessory, but also a sign of status and protection from evil. Jewelry and other grave goods protect the dead from harm on their way to the afterlife, and describe the status of the dead to their new community. Natufian grave goods consist mainly of personal ornaments, like beads made of shell, red deer teeth, bones and stone. There are pendants, bracelets, necklaces, earrings and belt-ornaments as well. A skull still attached to its body in the Valley Cave was decorated with shell beads.

The Natufians also domesticated dogs that appear as grave goods. At Ain Mallah an elderly Natufian was buried cradling a puppy in his left arm. Another grave containing both a Natufian and a dog has been excavated at the Hayonim Terrace.

**The Stories of Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1—22:40)**

Archaeology enriches the Stories of Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1—22:40) in a number of ways. First, the Carmel Mountains and Jericho were two important Natufian sites, and both appear in the stories as important sites for Elijah. Second, Elijah is a champion of the kind of village culture the Natufians perfected, and an opponent of the centralized urban cultures introduced in the Bronze Age. Third, like the Natufians, Elijah confronts a prolonged drought. Fourth, Elijah builds a Natufian platform to mark the sacred center of the Carmel Mountains to link the heavens and the earth. Fifth, Elijah mimes a Natufian burial to end the drought and summon the rain.

**Sacred Centers**
Elijah Divines Rain on the Carmel Mountains (1 Kgs 18:1-2+17-39) takes place at a prominent Natufian site. “Mt. Carmel” is not a single mountain, but a range jutting north and west into the Mediterranean Sea. The mountains are 13 miles long, 5-8 miles wide, and 556-1800 ft elevation.

**Carmel Mountains**

The Carmel Mountains were a fitting location for telling a story that will bring a long drought to an end. It was to the Carmel Mountains that the Natufian people withdrew at the onset of the Younger Dryas Cooling at the end of the Pleistocene era (10,300 B.C.E.) These mountains have a long history as a place to wait for rain. These mountains were also the home to the Natufian people who survived and thrived – a fitting model for the Israel that Elijah calls back to life.

The Carmel Mountains were not the only Natufian site associated with the Stories of Elijah. Jericho also appears as the site where Elijah inaugurates Elisha as his successor (2 Kgs 1:1-18. The Carmel Mountains and Jericho were the sacred centers of the world of Elijah, not the great cities of Samaria, Megiddo and Hazor.

**Villages and Cities**

The time in the Stories of Elijah is 886-842 B.C.E. when the household of Omri ruled Israel. It was the age of great cities, and the golden age of the state of Israel. Ahab (875-853 B.C.E.) was the household’s most outstanding ruler. This urban empire was the nemesis of the village culture of Elijah.

Under Ahab Israel has a powerful army, and was an economic and cultural center in Syria-Palestine. He built or re-built Samaria, Hazor, Dan, Ein Gev and Jericho. Israel was the strongest partner in a coalition of states in Syria-Palestine that, at least temporarily, stopped the westward advance of the Great King of Assyria.

Elijah also opposed the imperial worship of Yahweh in cities. Many commentaries consider Ba’al to be an idol, an "other god" (Exod 20:3) or the divine patron of other peoples living in Syria-Palestine. Here, however, “Ba’al” is considered as another title for Yahweh. Yahweh Ba’al, like Yahweh El ‘Olam in the Story of Abraham on Mt. Morah (Gen 21:33) reflects a theology, a way of understanding the relationship of Yahweh to the Hebrews. Yahweh El ‘Olam is Yahweh, the Faithful Creator. Yahweh Ba’al is Yahweh, the Great King.

Despite the judgment of the Bible itself (1 Kgs 16:31), Ahab was hardly a follower of a strange divine patron. He named his sons for Yahweh: Ahaziah (Hebrew: ‘ahayahu): Yahweh Endures!” and Joram (Hebrew: yoram): “Yahweh is Great!” The Review of the Annals for
Monarchs of Israel and Judah (1 Kgs 11:44—2 Kgs 25:30) portrays the household of Ahab negatively not because it failed to worship Yahweh, but because it did not limit the worship of Yahweh to the temple in Jerusalem.

Ahab and Elijah are both followers of Yahweh. Both agree that Yahweh is the divine patron of Israel. They disagree, however, on how Israel should honor Yahweh. Ahab and Jezebel worship Yahweh as a Great King like Melqart, the divine patron of Tyre and the household of Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:32; 2 Kgs 11:18). Elijah worships Yahweh as a Good Shepherd, who has promised to feed Israel forever. In the Stories of Elijah, these divine titles have been abbreviated. “Yahweh, the Great King (Hebrew: ba’al)” has been shortened to “Baal”; “Yahweh, the Good Shepherd” has been shortened to “Yahweh.” Nonetheless, both titles refer to the same divine patron, not two different divine patrons. “Baal” honors Yahweh as triumphant; “Yahweh” honors the divine patron of Israel as humble.

The tension reflected here in the Stories of Elijah appears throughout the Deuteronomistic History (Josh-2 Kgs) and the prophets. Early Israel (1250-1000 B.C.E.) was a decentralized, subsistence culture of villages. There were no monarchs, no taxes, no cities, no soldiers, and no slaves. The powerlessness of this social structure made it absolutely clear that the Hebrews survived not because of their own human accomplishments, but only because of Yahweh's divine protection. Yahweh alone was powerful.

When the Hebrews' raids on Philistine caravans prompted reprisals, however, David rescued the Hebrew villages by creating a centralized, surplus state culture modeled on Egypt. In the states of Israel and Judah there were monarchs, taxes, cities, soldiers and slaves. There was also a great deal of objection to such a powerful and triumphant culture represented by the prophets, and preserved as the Deuteronomistic History in the Bible today. Such a triumphant theology makes it too easy for humans that are powerful to forget their need for a divine patron. The consequences of such a theology are the loss of the land the children with which Yahweh endowed Abraham and Sarah. The conquest of Israel (7231 B.C.E.) and Judah (587 B.C.E.) and the deportation of their ruling households are the direct result of such triumphalism.

Elijah is a voice of this minority. Yahweh cares for Israel as Good Shepherd (Ps 23), not as a Great King. Yahweh is to be worshipped not in a grand temple in a great city built by the architects and masons of Tyre, but at an altar of uncut stones assembled by a single villager in a rustic place.

Ahab and Jezebel consider Elijah’s theology of a humble Yahweh to be archaic. Elijah considers Ahab and Jezebel’s theology of a triumphant Yahweh to be heretical. Therefore, Elijah does not indict Ahab and Jezebel for worshiping the wrong divine patron, but for worshiping Yahweh wrongly.

Elijah’s taunts the imperial worship of Yahweh in his duel in the Carmel Mountains with the royal prophets. His taunt is brimming with double entendre. On the surface the taunt echoes the liturgical language of the royal prophets. They addressed Yahweh as a Great King, as the people of Tyre addressed Melqart, whose statues they transported from one end of the Mediterranean to the other as they worked the trade lanes for which their city became famous. If a statue of
Melqart did not board every freighter that sailed from Tyre, and accompany every inland caravan, the commercial world of Tyre would collapse. Likewise, at the onset of the dry season, statues of Melqart would be taken to the border, where farms end and dry wasteland begins, to do battle with the heat of summer. The heat of the long, hot summer drove the life-sustaining moisture of Melqart to sleep, deep in the earth, only to be reawakened when the planting rains began in the fall. With only subtle changes in spelling, accent, or meaning, Elijah’s taunt conjures up the image of Melqart as an impotent old fool unable to perform the routines of daily living, such as getting in or out of bed and using the toilet, without assistance. Simply by shifting the pronunciation of a single letter, the taunt converts a liturgical expression meaning “to travel on business” to the vulgar expression “to go out into a field to relieve oneself” (Gen 24:61–67).

Pantomime is the art of gesture. First celebrated in the cave paintings and dances of the Stone Age, pantomime is a “movie”. The medium of action appeals to the sense of sight. It is quite distinct from story, whose medium of sound appeals to the sense of hearing. Pantomimes use gestures to address those human realities whose profundity demands silence. Pantomime is not solely a representational art describing events, but also a sympathetic art that brings about events. Therefore, it is a genre of social change that highlights and ridicules the faults of the powerful.

The prophets of ancient Israel were masters not only of the sounded art of word, but the silent art of movement as well. Therefore, the symbolic actions of Elijah here, like those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea (Isa 20:1–6; Jer 13:1–11; Hosea 1:1–3:5), are best understood as pantomimes.

On the Carmel Mountains Elijah retells a story of creation both in words and in pantomime. Just as the royal prophets mime their prayer in dance (1 Kgs 18:26), Elijah mimes his story with two symbolic acts. He begins by rebuilding the altar as the primeval mountain representing the dry land. Then, he digs a great circular reservoir that will hold the primeval sea, just like the huge round cauldron called “the sea” (2 Kgs 16:17), “the bronze sea” (2 Kgs 25:13), or “the molten sea” (1 Kgs 7:24) outside the temple. The dirt that Elijah piles along the edges of his trench creates the great dikes or horizons that will hold in the sea.

**Altars and High Places**

Like the Natufians, Elijah marked the sacred center on the Carmel Mountains with a high-place. In Jericho – another sacred center in the Natufian culture – archaeologists have recovered a Natufian platform, now pockmarked with pits dug into it by later cultures.
In the world of the Bible high places did not allow humans to get closer in elevation to their divine patron who was above them in the heavens. High places marked places where the earth was pregnant. The high place created an omphalos on the distended uterus on the surface of Mother Earth to mark the place where their Godmother gave birth to them.

By marking the sacred center with a high place, Elijah takes possession of the land in the name of Yahweh as the Good Shepherd. He recreates Israel by repeating the same words and actions by which Yahweh created the cosmos.

When humans settle a land, they recreate it. They survey the land to find its sacred center, and then construct their world to mirror the world of their divine patron. Elijah calls Ahab and Jezebel from Samaria – the sacred center of the state dedicated to Yahweh as the Great King – to Carmel – the sacred center of the villages dedicated to Yahweh as the Good Shepherd. Yahweh as a Great King is powerless here. Only Yahweh as a Good Shepherd can link earth heaven and the underworld from this sacred center, and bring it back to life from the drought.

The lightening which strikes from the heavens and passes through the high place that Elijah has built is an axis mundi – a link between the heavens, the earth and the underworld! As it was for the Natufians, the Carmel Mountains were the center of the world. Carmel was the cosmic mountain where life began, and could be born again.

There are two kinds of water in creation stories. The seas and great rivers threaten the cosmos (Gen 1:1; 2:6). Springs and rains sustain it (Ezek 31, 37; Ps 36:8-9). Elijah floods his model of the cosmos with the waters of the chaos.

Now, Elijah tells a creation story. The Bible no longer preserves the story but only the prayer with which he draws it to a close precisely at noon (1 Kgs 18:36). At that moment Yahweh strikes the waters of chaos with lightning. The waters recede and the dry land of the altar emerges. A new world has been created. Israel is free once again. Elijah sets the stage and tells the story that Yahweh acts out.

**Baal with Lightning Bolt**
Louvre
1700-1500 B.C.E.
Limestone
4.5 ft high, 15.75 inches wide
Ras Shamra (Ugarit)

Elijah’s pantomime and story were easily understood by the people gathered on the Carmel Mountains. A parallel appears on a limestone stela from Ugarit cut after 2000 B.C.E. On the stela a divine patron stands poised with a spear of lightning over the sea of chaos. Two other parallels from Ugarit also portray divine patrons wielding lightning bolts to drive off the waters of chaos and bring on the life-
giving rain.

At Ras Shamra (Ugarit) on the north coast of Syria Ba’al stands on the waters of chaos – the raging waves of the winter storms in the Mediterranean Sea. His left hand hurls a spear of lightning. The point of the spear strikes the ground and takes root, and the handle of the spear blooms. The lightning is not a threat, but a blessing. Lightning brings the rain that makes the crops grow.

Elijah celebrates Yahweh as a divine warrior who conquers the sea of chaos and is then enthroned as creator of the cosmos (Ps 29:1–11).

After many days the word of the Yahweh came to Elijah, in the third year of the drought, saying, “Go, meet with Ahab and I will send rain on the earth.” So Elijah went to meet with Ahab. The famine was severe in Samaria ….

17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab taunted him, “Who are you to trouble Israel?”

18 Elijah answered, “I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father’s household, because you have forsaken the commandments of Yahweh the Good Shepherd and followed Yahweh the Great King. Now therefore have all Israel assemble for me on the Carmel Mountains, with the four hundred fifty prophets of Yahweh the Great King and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

20 So Ahab sent to all the Israelites, and assembled the prophets on the Carmel mountains. Elijah then came near to all the people, and said, “How long are you going to dance for Yahweh as a Great King? If Yahweh is a Good Shepherd, dance for him; but if Yahweh is a Great King, then dance for him.”

The people did not say anything.

22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of Yahweh the Good Shepherd; but Yahweh the Great King’s prophets number four hundred fifty. Let two bulls be given to us; let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. Then you call on the name of Yahweh the Great King and I will call on the name of Yahweh the Good Shepherd; the divine patron who answers by fire is indeed the divine patron of Israel.”

All the people answered, “Well spoken!”

25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Yahweh the Great King, “Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many; then call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it.” So they took the bull that was given them, prepared it, and called on the name of Yahweh the Great King from morning until noon, crying, “O Great King, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no answer. They danced about the altar that they had made.

27 At noon Elijah taunted them, saying, “Sing louder! Perhaps the Great King is meditating, or has gone out into the field to relieve himself, or is on a journey, or is asleep and needs help getting out of bed.”

28 Then they chanted aloud and, as was their custom, they cut themselves with swords and knives until the blood gushed out over them. As midday passed, they sang until the time for sacrifice, but there was no voice, no answer, and no response.
Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come closer to me”; and all the people came closer to
him. First he repaired the altar of Yahweh the Good Shepherd that had been destroyed; 31 Elijah
took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word
of Yahweh came, saying, “Israel shall be your name”; 32 with the stones he built an altar in the
name of Yahweh the Good Shepherd. Then he made a trench around the altar, large enough to
contain two measures of seed. 33 Next he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it
on the wood. He said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the
wood.” 34 Then he said, “Do it a second time”; and they did it a second time. Again he said, “Do it
a third time”; and they did it a third time, 35 so that the water ran all around the altar, and filled the
trench also with water.

At the time of the offering of the oblation, the prophet Elijah came near and said, “Yahweh
the Good Shepherd, divine patron of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you
are the divine patron of Israel, that I am your slave, and that I have done all these things at your
bidding. 37 Answer me, Yahweh the Good Shepherd. Answer me, so that this people may know
that you, Yahweh the Good Shepherd, are their divine patron, and that you have turned their hearts
back.”

Then the lightening of Yahweh the Good Shepherd struck the burnt offering, the wood, the
stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 When all the people
saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “Yahweh the Good Shepherd indeed is our divine
patron…”

Inauguration of Elijah at Jezreel (1 Kgs 18:41–46)

In an Inauguration of Elijah at Jezreel, the prophet draws rain from the sky like a shaman.
The story opens when Elijah promises Ahab that the rain is coming. “I hear thunder” (1 Kgs
18:41), says Elijah. He orders Ahab to prepare to celebrate the end of the drought with a feast.
The fast imposed by the drought is over.

To summon the rain Elijah takes the fetal position of a body in a Natufian burial, and then
stands. The gesture mimics a human birth. Elijah repeats the gesture until, on the seventh time, a
rain cloud appears on the horizon. Although the cloud is small, Elijah promises that the rain will
flood the Wadi Kishon and trap Ahab in the mountains if he does not leave immediately for his
palace at Jezreel. Elijah runs the seventeen miles between the Carmel Mountains and Jezreel in
front of Ahab’s chariot. The prophet’s strides mark him here as more divine than human. In the
Stories of Aqhat, Dan’il and Danitiya recognize the approach of Kothar-wa-hasis as a divine
messenger by his giant strides.

Elijah Divines Rain on the Carmel Mountains (1 Kgs 18:1–2+17–39)

Inauguration of Elijah at Jezreel (1 Kgs 18:41–46)
Archaeology cannot prove that Elijah ever existed, or that there was a duel between him and the prophets of Ahab and Jezebel on the Carmel Mountains. Nor can archaeology prove that Elijah did not exist. What archaeology can do is to recreate the world where the Stories of Elijah developed, and the world described in those stories. Only when archaeology helps us to understand the world where a story was told, and world described in a story can those of us who no longer live in those worlds know what the story means.

For example, Elijah Divines Rain on the Carmel Mountains does not mean that there is only one God, or that the God of Elijah is the only true God. Likewise the story does not mean that working miracles is the way to convert people from sin to salvation. Monotheism and miracles are part of our world, not the world where these stories developed nor the world that these stories describe.

The archaeology of the Natufian period that the Stories of Elijah describe and the archaeology of the Iron II period in Syria-Palestine where these stories develop suggest a different meaning for these stories. Elijah represents those people of Yahweh who believe that their divine patron calls them to live in a decentralized, subsistence, village culture which was the common way of life during the Natufian period in Syria-Palestine. For the people of Yahweh represented by Elijah, Yahweh is a Good Shepherd. Ahab and Jezebel represent those people of Yahweh who believe that their divine patron calls them to live in a centralized, surplus, urban culture which dominated Hebrew life during the Iron II period in the state of Israel. For the people of Yahweh represented by Ahab and Jezebel, Yahweh is a Great King.

Archaeology, like the other sciences, is not absolute. It collects and studies artifacts and uses them to construct working models. Then archaeology tests these working models to see how well – or how poorly – they interpret experience. If the reconstructions of the Natufian period here are correct, and if they are correctly applied to the Stories of Elijah, then they will become a standard part of the interpretive tradition of Bible. If the reconstructions are not correct, or if they are not correctly applied, then new reconstructions will be developed, and new ways of applying them to the Stories of Elijah will develop. The interaction between archaeology and the Bible is a dynamic learning experience.
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Chapter 03
Neolithic Culture in the Stories of Adam and Eve
(8500-4300 B.C.E.)

The Renaissance (1300-1600 C.E.) in Italy brought the Medieval Period (500 – 1450 C.E.) to a close in Western Europe, and gave birth to the Enlightenment. Medieval culture was a culture of mystery that taught humans to respect what they did not understand. The Renaissance was a culture of discovery that taught humans to use their intelligence to understand the world where they lived. It was a revolution in both art and science. The Neolithic period, like the Renaissance, was an equally intense period of human discovery and creativity.

Top Plan of Neolithic House
6500 B.C.E.
Catal Hayuk

From the Garden of Eden to Villages

During the Neolithic Period (8500-4300 B.C.E.) pioneered by the Natufian Culture (10,300-8,500 B.C.E.) humans made a commitment to settle down. Gradually the Natufian hunter and gather culture reflected in the Story of the ‘adam as a Gatherer (Gen 2:4-17) and the Story of the ‘adam as a Hunter (Gen Gen 2:18-20) in the Garden of Eden gave way to the Neolithic herding and farming village culture in the Story of the Eve and Adam as Child-bearers and Farmers (Gen 2:25—4:2).

Neolithic peoples invented new ways to farm, to herd, to build houses, to make tools, to make pottery and to link the human plane where they lived with the divine plane of their divine patrons and their dead. These practical inventions not only produced radical changes in daily life; they also inspired dramatic changes in the way that Neolithic peoples understood life.

Permanent Neolithic villages in Israel have been excavated at Nahal Oren75 and Megiddo in the Carmel Mountains; Kefar Giladi near Dan and Banias in the Galilee; Beisamun near Lake Hula76; Yiftahel77 and Horvat Minha on the Jordan River; Sha’ar ha-Golan on the Yarmuk River; Jericho and Gilgal in the Jordan Valley; Abu Ghosh near Jerusalem; Nahal Hemar on the Dead Sea.

During the Neolithic period temperatures in Syria-Palestine stabilized at their current 21st century levels, although there was more rain then than now. Therefore, Neolithic people were
also able to settle the near desert Negeb at places like Gebel Maghara -- the Mountains of the Turquoise Mines, and the deep desert of Sinai at places like Har Harif -- the Sharp Mountain.

**From Caves to Houses**

Neolithic peoples invented architecture that allowed them to move out of the caves of their Natufian ancestors and into free standing houses. The distance between the caves of Natufian hunters and gathers and their animals and plants kept them safely away from other hunters and gathers, and from animal predators. Neolithic farmers and herders needed to be close to their crops and herds to protect them from other farmers and herders and from animal predators. Therefore, caves were abandoned and free standing villages were constructed. Architecture was a by-product of herding and farming.

**Neolithic Village at Catal Hayuk**

Neolithic people built single-storied houses in rectangular shape, supported by wooden beams. Most houses were built with a flat roof that provided working space for food preparation. Houses did not have a door but were entered through openings in the roofs that Neolithic peoples reached using wooden ladders. After entering their houses, they pulled the ladder down into their houses to keep them safe.

Inside the houses were benches of firmly packed soil running along the walls for sleeping. Members of the household who died were buried in the benches where they slept.

**From Hunting to Herding**

Neolithic people decorated the inside walls of their houses with spectacular paintings of their divine patrons, their human ancestors, people dying and rising from the dead, hunts of wild animals, flowers, geometric patterns, imprints of hands, stars and an erupting volcano.

**Hunters in Leopard Skins Surround a Bull**

6500 B.C.E.
Wall Painting
Bull is 6 ft long
Catal Hayuk
In one large wall painting at Catal Hayuk a wild bull over six feet long is surrounded by hunters wearing leopard skins. The horns of such a great bull have been recovered at Ubeidiya (1.5 million -700,000 B.C.E.). Each horn is six feet long and the span between them is over five feet.

Ubeidiya is in the north of the Jordan Valley southeast of the Sea of Galilee in Israel, a remnant of the prehistoric Lake Ubeidiya. Excavations at the site have revealed over sixty settlement layers. Due to later earthquake activity, these archaeological layers now lie at an almost vertical angle.

Besides painting animals on walls and sketching them on stones, Neolithic artists also learned to shape animals in both clay and stone. A wonderful collection has been uncovered at a sanctuary in the Uvda Valley. This rich alluvial valley is in the mountains northwest of Eilat. Abundant rainfall created a savannah where Neolithic people gathered grains and hunted deer gazelle, ass and birds.

One open-air sanctuary in the Uvda Valley has a 40 x 40 ft. square courtyard surrounded by a low stone wall. Its corners are oriented to the four points of the compass. There were three cone-shaped jars full of ashes in the courtyard and in the holy of holies there were sixteen upright stones each 8-12 inches tall.

Near the sanctuary is a “mosaic” of sixteen life-size animals, made of small rectangular pieces of limestone embedded into the ground. Fifteen leopards with square heads, huge eyes, four legs and upward-curving tails face east. One antelope with twisted horns faces west. These animal images were not simply works of art or a record of a hunt. They were icons that channeled divine power from the divine plane to the human plane, and allowed Neolithic people to manage their daily life.
From Stone to Clay

Kneading Clay
Wall Painting
Victor Bryant ©1994, 2001

Natufian peoples shaped vessels, tools, baskets and statues from wood, reeds, stone and bone. As early as 5500 BCE, Neolithic peoples in Syria-Palestine discovered how to throw pottery. These potters knew how to distinguish between clay and other soils. They also knew how to mix and knead their clay so that it could be shaped into coils that they shaped on woven mats.

The handles or spouts of some pots were decorated with notches or incisions.

After pots were shaped, they were carefully dried to a leather-hard consistency without cracking or shrinking.

Some dried pots were painted with simple lines or geometric designs.

A slip or glaze was often applied to the outside surface of some pots to help waterproof the pot and make it more attractive. These coatings of colored, opaque, or transparent material were made from fine grained clays or sand containing trace elements of metals such as copper, iron or lapis lazuli. The glaze on some pots was polished or burnished into the clay with a stone to give pots a lustrous sheen, and to prevent the glaze from flaking off when the pots were fired.

Neolithic potters originally fired on open hearths. Later pottery was fired in enclosed kilns. Animal dung was used as a fuel to raise temperatures in the kiln to 1300-1700 degrees Farenheit to create a dark red glow in the clay.
The potter's wheel developed gradually. Neolithic potters probably graduated from coiling their pots on a mat to using a shallow bowl to build a coiled pot. The slow wheel was a simple turntable. Potters attached a wooden platform where potters shaped the clay to a stone bearing that fit into a stone socket. These wheels did not turn easily, and were only be used for easier coiling.

The speed of the slow wheel could be increased if one potter turned the table, while another potter shaped the clay. A wall painting in the tomb of Kenamun at Thebes shows two potters working together on a slow wheel. Kenamun was a mayor of Thebes in the 18th Dynasty (1550-1070 B.C.E.) who was also in charge of the granaries of Karnak temple. The potters are part of a larger painting in his tomb showing of the arrival at Thebes of a fleet of sea-going ships from Syria and the Aegean.

The fast wheel developed at the beginning of the Middle Bronze period (2000-1550 BCE). Two wheels were connected to a smoother running shaft. Potters turned the lower wheel with their feet, and shaped their pots on the top wheel with their hands.

Pottery came in many shapes and sizes. Enormous storage jars preserved grain. Smaller jars stored and shipped wine and olive oil. Miniature jugs, drinking cups, round "pilgrim flasks," broad open bowls, cooking pots, and strainers for beer and wine.
Like herding, farming and architecture, pottery making gave Neolithic people not only a
reliable means of cooking, transporting, and storing food, but changed the way they thought
about human creation. An example of how Neolithic artists viewed pottery as a sacred science
can be seen in their creation of a range of ceramics with human features. Some of these figures
are divine, others are human.

Nursing Godmother
Israel Museum
6,000 B.C.E.
Clay
4 3/8x2 1/2 in
Horvat Minha

Neolithic statues of the Godmother shaped from clay were common. Most are seated on a birthing chair. The only complete
statue of a Godmother was recovered at Horvat Minha in Israel where the Yarmuk River flows into the Jordan River from the east.

The Godmother is seated, although the chair itself is missing. Like similar statues, she is steatopygous or full figured. Her breasts are
pendulous, her abdomen is distended, her hips and legs are heavy. She is a child-bearer with her left hand lifting her breast to nurse her children.
The most famous ceramic statue of a Godmother was recovered from Catal Hayuk in Turkey. She is giving birth seated on a stool and using two leopards to support herself in the squatting position. Her hips are wide from child-bearing. Her breasts are full from nursing. She is the “Mother of all Living” (Gen 3:20).

Catal Huyuk is a Neolithic city built between 6500 and 5700 BCE along the edge of a small river south of the great salt depression in central Turkey today and north of the fertile Konya Plain. The plain stretches from Catal Hayuk to the Hasan Dag volcanoes. It lies 3000 feet above sea level. The village was built in two areas, leaving two tels. The largest is 32 acres. The water in nearby crater lakes is brackish, but springs fed by rain in the hills north of the city provided fresh water. The city traded salt mined from Tuz Golu, a great salt lake; obsidian mined at Hasan Dag and Karaca Dag; and flint.

The earliest painting of a leopard was made in Chauvet Cave in the Ardeche Gorge of southern France. The cave was discovered in 1994, and explored by Jean Clottes, a science adviser to France's Ministry of Culture, in 1998. The leopard is one of 416 paintings of predators like rhinos, lions, cave bears and mammoths in a string of three chambers, 1,700 feet long, as well as one connecting gallery and three vestibules.

Most cave art depicts hunted animals. These animals, however, are not eaten. They are predatory, dangerous animals, whose strength and power Stone Age artists were trying to capture.
At least one-third of the buildings in strata VII and VIII at Catal Hayuk are sanctuaries. The walls and floors of these sanctuaries were repeatedly refinished with white plaster. Some sanctuary walls were covered with paintings that were annually painted and repainted. In stratum VII there is a pair of painted leopards. These leopards have been repeatedly replastered and repainted. The repeated plastering and repainting is an indication that this artwork is not simply record keeping. The repetition is a form of storytelling that re-enacts the divine events.

By annually re-enacting the creation of the world and human creation traditional cultures remind themselves of their role as co-creators with their divine patrons. Creation is never a past, historical event, but an on-going present event in which every generation participates. Humans and their world are annually recreated. Each year they return to that first moment of creation. All the failures of the preceding year are destroyed, and everything starts over in perfect condition. These celebrations of the New Year are acts of hope. Failure exists, but it is not permanent.

**Plastered Skulls**

Neolithic artists also plastered human skulls, and shaped life-size human bodies from reeds and clay. These works of art are not portraits; they are powerful representations of the incarnation of the divine in human form and linked the living and the dead.

Although Natufian peoples buried human skulls, only Neolithic peoples reconstructed the features on skulls with plaster. Many lower jaws and the teeth have been removed from the skulls. The eye sockets are inlaid with cowie shells or pellets of clay. Carefully shaped bases angle the skulls in a particular direction. Some of the skulls are painted with red or brown iron oxide. The top and back of the skull were usually left untouched, but occasionally they were painted. Most of the plastered skulls were found below the floors of houses.

**Cowie Shells**

The dead of the Neolithic village of Jericho were buried beneath the floors of houses or in the fill of abandoned buildings. The graves frequently contained more than one burial. Some of the skeletons in these multiple burials were articulated – each bone was in its correct anatomical position; some were not. The skulls had been removed from many of the skeletons.
The practice of separating skulls from skeletons and reburying the disordered skeletal remains in collective graves was widespread during Neolithic period, but only the skulls recovered at Jericho, Tell Ramad and Beisamun were plastered.

Seven skulls were found buried together under the floor of one room of a house and two more in another room of the same house at Jericho. No other detached skulls were excavated anywhere else at Jericho. The jaws of these skulls had been removed from all but one and the face and base of the skull covered with plaster. The features were reconstructed to give the appearance of a living human being. One other plastered skull was found at the north end of the mound making a total of ten altogether. Five of these skulls were adult males.

In addition to the plastered skulls recovered at Jericho, there were also statues from the Neolithic period were also recovered at Jericho and at Ain Ghazal in 1983. The site was initially discovered during the building of a new road in the 1970’s on the north-east outskirts of Amman, Jordan. Ain Ghazal is almost thirty acres, and was occupied from 7250-5000 B.C.E. Radiocarbon tests date charcoal in the pit with the statues to 6000 B.C.E.

The statues were carefully buried in a building inside the village. Below the pit were two plastered floors, but there is no evidence that the statues were used in the building where they were buried, or in any of the surrounding buildings.
There are two kinds of statues: “Dumpies” and “Figures”. Dumpies are about a foot high; Figures are three feet high. Dumpies have solid, roughly shaped and unpainted bodies. Figures have well-defined arms and legs. The bodies of the statues were painted with red iron oxide, black carbon and white lime.

The heads of both Dumpies and Figures have detailed eyes, noses, mouths and ears. Their eyes were painted with black tar and blue copper oxide. They are elliptical and have round irises. Their noses turn up at the ends and the nostrils are simply two narrow cuts. Their mouths are also just narrow cuts. Their ears are small, unshaped knobs.

The statues are shaped from plaster over a core of branches tied with string. Although this organic material has decayed, it left impressions in the plaster. The cores in the Dumpies were one bundle of branches. The cores of the Figures were several bundles tied together with string. The heads and necks of the cores were also reinforced with string. The branches in the cores stuck out from the bases of the statues so that they could be mounted into plaster floors.

The Story of the ‘adam as a Gatherer (Gen 2:4-17)

When Neolithic people invented farming and pottery, they created a new world. Consequently, creation stories told during the subsequent Bronze Age (3300-1200 B.C.E.) often describe divine patrons as farmers when they create the world, and as potters when they create humans.
The metaphor of the Creator as a potter is modified so that the techniques of the divine and human potters are similar, but not identical. All potters work with two ingredients. One ingredient is firm and the other is fluid. Human potters mix clay with water. Divine potters use a variety of thinners.

In the Stories of Atrahasis the divine midwife, Nintu-Mami, thins her clay with blood (Atra 1:229–234). In the Stories of Gilgamesh the godmother, Aruru, uses saliva (Gilg 1:30–40). In the Stories of Adam and Eve Yahweh wets the clay with only the condensation created by breathing on it.

Many translations refer to the human element that Yahweh uses as “dust,” not clay, and do not continue the image of Yahweh as a potter from the beginning of the verse: “then Yahweh, our Creator, formed the ‘adam from the dust of the ground”, to the end of the verse: “and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life” (Gen 2:7). Consequently, these translations consider the divine element to be breath, not fluid (Ps 104:27–30; Job 34:14–15).

There is no parallel in Mesopotamia for breathing life into clay. In Egypt, Amon Ra is portrayed as breathing into the pharaoh’s nose to authorize his coronation, but this breathing motif appears in coronation stories, not in creation stories. The defining metaphors in the stories of Adam and Eve are from Mesopotamia, not Egypt. For the Hebrews, a living creature is moist, not inflated. Blood, sperm, tears, and saliva distinguish the living from the dead, the moist from the dry. Therefore, it is more consistent with parallels from Mesopotamia to portray Yahweh as a divine potter who shapes the ‘adam from clay and then gently moistens and polishes the ‘adam with saliva.
Further Reading


Chapter 04

Early Bronze Culture in the Stories of Cain and Abel
(3300-2000 B.C.E.)

Abstract: The Story of Adam and Eve as Farmers and Child-bearers (Gen 2:25-4:2) and the Stories of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:3–5:32) are not sequels demonstrating the spread of sin, but parallels celebrating the founding of a new world, where humans can create. Using social scientific studies of human sacrifice in Mediterranean and pre-Columbian cultures, it is possible to argue that it is the soil, not Yahweh, “...which had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering it had no regard” (Gen 4:4-5), and that Cain sacrifices, rather than murders Abel (Gen 4:8). These stories do not indict Cain for cursing humanity with murder, but rather celebrate his household for blessing humanity with endowments like cities, tent making, herding, music, metal work, and, eventually a system of justice seventy-seven times more efficient than the mark with which Yahweh tattooed Cain to protect him from his enemies. The Stories of Cain are part of a tradition celebrating the progress of humans from living to life giving, not part of a story of the spread of an original sin.

Creation Stories (Gen 1:1–11:26)

The powerful tell creation stories to describe how the culture they have created works. The book of Genesis opens with an unforgettable set of creation stories like the Stories of Adam and Eve (Gen 2:4—4:2) and the Stories of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:3—5:32).

Creation stories are not reports on the past. The Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel provide little truly scientific information about the origins of the world or the origins of humanity. Planetary geology, paleontology, and archaeology are not ancient interests. The Hebrews lacked interest in forging a chain between themselves and early humans.

Cultures tell creation stories to put human life in their time into perspective. They are timeless reflections on human life and death, and on all the questions humans raise to orient themselves to the greater world in which they live.

The time when the Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel as they are preserved in the Bible today were told is after 587 B.C.E. when Judah was conquered by Babylon, and the households of David were deported from Jerusalem to Babylon.

The time in the Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel is the epoch primeval. Only events of universal significance take place in the epoch primeval. Setting a story in the epoch primeval does not date events, it qualifies them. It does not explain when something took place, but why things are the way they are in the time when the story itself is told.

The Stories of Adam and Eve describe the epoch primeval with metaphors drawn from the Neolithic period when Stone Age humans took two momentous steps toward civilization. They learned to farm and they learned to make pottery.
The Stories of Cain and Abel also celebrate the household of Cain as a Neolithic people who found a New World, create a new people and build the first city. Cain's departure from the Old World of Eden brings life to the New World or Irad. Cain's child and Cain's city have the same name: "Irad." Irad corresponds to Mesopotamian "Eridu," the first city built before the flood according to the Sumerian King List.

The household of Cain, like the seven great teachers (Akkadian: apkallu) in Mesopotamian tradition, endows humanity with all the skills of civilization. Cain or Kenan is the first teacher; Enoch is the second. Irad or Jared is the third teacher; Mehuyael or Mahalalel is the fourth. Methushael or Methusalah is the fifth teacher; Lamech the sixth and Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain are the seventh.

The genealogy of Lamech (Gen 4:18-24) emphasizes the increasing fertility of the new world. Cain's one wife gives birth to only one child, who gives birth to one child, who gives birth to one child. For five generations, the new world has a stable, but not an expanding population. Then Lamech marries twin wives: Adah and Zillah. The hard times are over and primeval fertility begins to blossom once again (Gen 4:3). These twins each give birth to twins. Jabal and Jubal are identical twin boys. Tubalcain, a boy and Naamah, a girl, are fraternal twins. The population of the new world is booming.

The endowment of population in creation stories always comes with the endowment of technology and new social institutions. Jabal and Jubal gift the new world with twin technologies. Jabal invents tent making and herding. Jubal invents the music of stringed instruments and wind instruments. Tubalcain and Naamah gift the new world with working bronze and working iron.

Lamech is not only a husband and father, he is the Hammurabi of the Stories of Cain and Abel who promulgates a new legal code. As part of the marriage covenant, a husband must agree to protect and provide for his wife. Lamech promises his wives protection eleven times greater than that which Yahweh promised Cain. His words are a promise that anyone who threatens the household of Lamech is as good as dead.

Stories of Cain and Abel
(Gen 4:3—5:32).

When the days of grazing were done, (Gen 4:3)
And the days of farming came to an end,
Cain brought Yahweh produce from the soil;
Abel brought prize yearlings from the flock.

Abel's sacrifice brought him a good year,
Cain's sacrifice did not.
Cain mourned.
He lost face.
"Why are you grieving?"
Why have you lost face?" Yahweh asked.
"If it is a good year for you, then why not hold up your head?
   If it is a bad year for you, then the snake is at your door."\textsuperscript{102}
"The instinct of the snake is to strike out at you,
   But you can master it."

climax

Then Cain called out to his brother….

They went outdoors.
They came to a field.
Cain lifted up his hand over his brother.
He sacrificed Abel.

denouement

Finally, Yahweh summoned Cain:
"Where is your brother Abel?"
"I do not know," Cain answered.
   "Am I the shepherd's shepherd?"
"Your brother's blood cries out from the soil.
   You shall curse the soil, because it drank your brother's blood.
You shall work the soil,
   But the soil shall not work for you.
You shall forage the earth like a wild animal,
   You shall become like a scavenger."
Cain appealed: "My burden will be greater than I can bear.
   If you cut me off from the soil and from you,
If I forage the earth like a wild animal,
   If I become a scavenger,
Hunters will stalk me like an animal:
   Trappers will kill me."
But Yahweh swore:
   "Anyone who kills Cain shall die seven times."
Therefore, Yahweh tattooed Cain.
The mark of Yahweh would protect him against hunters.
Then Yahweh sent Cain forth,
   Yahweh dispatched him to Nod, east of Eden.
Cain had intercourse with his wife,
   And she conceived.
The wife of Cain gave birth to Enoch,
And Enoch founded a city.  
Enoch named the city after his son, Eridu.  
To Eridu was born Mehujael.  
To Mehujael was born Methusael,  
   To Methusael was born Lamech.

Adam had intercourse with Eve,  
   Eve gave birth to Seth,  
Singing: "Yahweh has sown a seed,  
   Our Godparent has replaced the Abel whom Cain has slain."  
To Seth was born Enosh,  
   Whose household called Yahweh by name.

Lamech married two women:  
   Adah first, Zillah second.  
Adah gave birth to two boys:  
   Jabal, whose people weave tents and herded cattle,  
   And Jubal, whose people strum lyres and play flutes.  
Zillah gave birth to a boy and a girl:  
   Tubalcain, whose people work bronze,  
   And Naamah, whose people work iron.  
"Adah and Zillah, trust me, said Lamech;  
   "Women of Lamech, believe my words." Lamech swore.  
"I will execute the elder who shames my good name,  
   "I will kill the warrior who lays a hand on me."  
"If Cain's killer will die seven times,  
   "Lamech's killer will die seventy-seven times."

1. Confessional Readings of the Stories of Cain and Abel

For the New Testament, Jewish tradition and Christian theology, the Stories of Cain and Abel are stories about original sin, false worship, an inscrutable God, jealousy, murder and vengeance. These interpretations are the products of theological criticism, which begins its reading of the Bible in light of the pastoral needs of Jews, Christians and Muslims at a particular time in their history. Confessional criticism was the standard method of biblical interpretation until the end of the nineteenth century. 103

In contrast to confessional criticism that begins reading the Bible in the worlds where it is interpreted, historical criticism begins reading the Bible in the worlds where its traditions developed. Historical criticism does not eliminate pastoral applications of the Bible, but does expect that pastoral applications be coherent with the use of biblical traditions in their communities of origin. Historical criticism became the method of choice for biblical scholars throughout the twentieth century.

Historical critics eventually reread virtually every biblical tradition in light of how it was understood in its community of origin before moving on to study its biblical and post-biblical
tradition history. Despite this century-long project, however, confessional interpretations still dominate the scholarship of the Stories of Cain and Abel, as well as the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (Gen 1:1—2:4), the Stories of Adam and Eve (Gen 2:4—4:2) and the Flood Stories (Gen 6:1—11:26).

### a. Original Sin

Augustine (354-430 CE) and other Christian theologians understand the Stories of Cain and Abel to be the stories about the spread of sin. The sin of disobedience which Adam and Eve commit spreads to the sin of sacrilege when Cain offers his unworthy sacrifice (Gen 4:3-7), which spreads the sin of murder when Cain kills Abel (Gen 4:8), which spreads to the sin of perjury when Cain denies knowing where Abel is (Gen 4:9-10), which spreads to the sin of polygamy when Lamech marries more than one wife (Gen 4:19), which spreads to the sin of blood vengeance when Lamech threatens to avenge any injury to his household seventy-seven times (Gen 4:23-4). The only bright spot in this reading appears when the household of Enoch begins to worship Yahweh (Gen 4:25).

Augustine’s theology of original sin continues to have a significant impact on western European cultures, biblical religions and on-going biblical scholarship. For example, English Common Law uses Augustine’s theology to confer police power on states, for example, to allow them to control anti-social or “fallen” human beings; Catholics use Augustine’s theology to describe the purpose of baptism as “washing away original sin”, and biblical scholars use Augustine’s theology to reconstruct the plot of a hypothetical source for the book of Genesis called the “Yahwist” or “J”.

### b. False Worship

Although the Hebrew (Gen 4:4) reads simply: “Abel brought the fat parts of the herd’s first born”, the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews understands the phrase to mean that the sacrifice of Abel was better than the sacrifice of Cain (Heb 11:4). Cain’s sacrifice has been considered sacrilegious for two reasons. First, Cain did not offer the best of his produce. Second, Cain did not offer a blood sacrifice.

In the City of God (Book 15, Chapter 7), Augustine follows the lead of the Septuagint (Gen 4:7) in explaining why the offering of Cain was sacrilegious. The Hebrew text reads: “If you do well, will you not be accepted? (NRSV)” The Greek text reads: “Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it?” Cain brought the correct offering at the right time and to the right place to the right God, but his offering was incomplete. He did not bring the whole offering.

### c. An Inscrutable God

Confessional criticism also asks questions like: “Why did Yahweh accept Abel's offering, but not Cain's?”

### d. Jealously
Confessional criticism also understands the Stories of Cain and Abel to be an explanation of an ancient, and irreconcilable, conflict between farmers and herders.\textsuperscript{110}

**Selfishness**

Confessional criticism understands the Stories of Cain and Abel to be contrasting the generosity of Abel with the selfishness of Cain.\textsuperscript{111} Abel brought the best; Cain did not.

e. **Murder**

The Letter of Jude (Jude 11) pronounces judgment upon those who act like Cain, Balaam and Korah, and lead others into sin.

….convict Cain of sacrilege and murder (4 Mace 18:11; 1 John 3:12)

For Josephus and many rabbis, Cain and Abel are moral exemplars.\textsuperscript{112} Abel represents the virtuous, Cain the greedy. Abel is an innocent victim, Cain a premeditating murderer.

“Why was Cain angry with Abel, and not with Yahweh?”

“How did Cain kill Abel?”

“How was Cain punished?”

They explain Cain’s fate by understanding him to be the child of Eve and the devil, who is condemned to the degrading life of a farmer, and who does not offer Yahweh appropriate sacrifice in a timely manner.

Cain hates Abel for refusing to let him marry their sister.

, and beats him to death with a rock.

The epitome of Cain’s evil is revealed when he lies to Yahweh, rather than confessing his crime, but, in the end, Cain does repent.\textsuperscript{113}

f. **Vengeance**

Variations of ancient understandings of the death of Abel as murder continue to appear in both the work of scholars and preachers.\textsuperscript{114} Murder becomes the seed of civilization. The founders of great cities must first kill their brothers.\textsuperscript{115}

Some scholars consider the phrase: “Next she bore…” (Gen 4:2) in the Stories of Adam and Eve as an indication that Cain and Abel are twins like Romulus and Remus. Cain murders Abel and then founds the city of Enoch, a cradle of civilization in the eastern Mediterranean. Romulus murders Remus and then founds the city Rome, a cradle of civilization in the western Mediterranean. Murder and cities are the work of humans who want to be divine.
“The earth that supports life, now defiled by life’s wanton destruction – watered not by rain (wished and sacrificed for) but by blood, shed by the farmer’s hand – becomes an alien place for the murderer. The world is arranged so that murder will not go unnoticed; it will also not go unanswered. The earth shall resist the murderer’s plow; nowhere on earth shall he find a comfortable place to settle, both because no one else will welcome him and because his conscience and his fears will give him no rest. A man who has once shed blood knows in his marrow that his own life hangs by a thread that he lives, as it were, by the grace of God. Despite the fact that God does not exact the fitting specific (capital) punishment for his murder – as there is yet no law against it, there can be no exact punishment – Cain is nonetheless thrown into despair.” 117

2. Social-Scientific Readings of the Stories of Cain and Abel

Original sin, false worship, an inscrutable God, jealousy, murder and vengeance were important issues in the world of Hellenism where the New Testament, Jewish tradition and Christian theology developed. They were not, however, important issues in the world of the Bible where the Stories of Cain and Abel developed. In the world of the Bible the issues were land and children, farming and herding, crop failure, risk sharing, human sacrifice, law and order.

a. Land and Children

Studies of ancient Near Eastern creation stories from Egypt and Mesopotamia are not about sin, but about human life. They are stories about how humans create, about land and children.

Creation stories ask: “Should humans be immortal or mortal? “Were humans created to live forever, or to lay down their lives so that others might live?” “Should humans be infertile or fertile?” “Are humans unique creations of their divine patrons, or children created from their human parents?” Creation stories do not draw tightly logical or conclusive arguments. They are not juridical; they are philosophical. They contemplate the great mysteries of human life. The results are enlightening, not compelling.

Telling creation stories answers a widespread human complaint that land and children cause suffering. Humans complain that mortality and fertility have turned them into slaves, so they do not want to have to harvest and to have children. They want to live in an Eden where only their divine patrons effortlessly farm the land and create the children. They want to be immortal and infertile

The Stories of Cain and Abel celebrate the household of Cain for discovering how to farm the land, to build cities, to make tents, to herd livestock, to play music, to work metal, to worship Yahweh and to administer justice with a legal system seventy-seven times more
efficient than the mark with which Yahweh tattooed Cain to protect him from his enemies. These stories chart the progress of humans from living to life giving.

1) Ancient Near Eastern Parallels

The Stories of Cain and Abel are creation stories parallel with the Stories of Anubis and Bata, the Stories of Seth and Osiris, the Stories of Adapa, the Stories of Etana, the Stories of Aqhat, the Stories of Utnapishtim and the Stories of Gilgamesh.¹¹⁸

Some studies argue that creation stories lament a missed opportunity for humans to become immortal and infertile. Had Adapa, Etana, Aqhat, Utnapishtim or Gilgamesh, for example, succeeded in becoming immortal and infertile, then human storytellers and their audiences would not have to suffer. Suffering is a sentence for their failure. Therefore, creation stories encourage their audiences to seize any opportunity to become divine like Utnapishtim, Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11), and to avoid the hesitation or distractions of Adapa, Etana, Aqhat or Gilgamesh.¹¹⁹

Reading the Stories of Adapa, Etana, Aqhat and Gilgamesh as stories of missed opportunity, however, reads these ancient Near Eastern traditions as Augustine reads the biblical tradition. By arguing that Eve and Cain like Adapa, Etana, Aqhat and Gilgamesh miss opportunities to become divine, this reading imposes a western Mediterranean and Christian theology on an eastern Mediterranean and non-Christian tradition. The Stories of Adapa, Etana and Gilgamesh should be used to understand the Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel, not vice versa.

The Stories of Adapa, Etana and Gilgamesh argue that the Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel consider a world where only the divine farm and bear children to be a dream. These stories inspire humans to be humble. Only creatures that leave or decline Eden are truly human. They plead with their audiences to embrace fertility and mortality, to work the land and to conceive its children and to lay down their lives so that others may live. Mortality and fertility are the boundaries that separate humans from their divine patrons.

a) Stories of Anubis and Bata

b) Stories of Seth and Osiris

c) Stories of Adapa

d) Stories of Etana

e) Stories of Aqhat

f) Stories of Utnapishtim

g) Stories of Gilgamesh
2) Biblical Parallels

The Stories of Adam and Eve do not precede the Stories of Cain and Abel chronologically. The Stories of Cain and Abel are parallel to the Stories of Adam and Eve and to the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth. Each cycle is a variation of the same story and addresses the same question: “What does it mean to be human?”

One indication that the stories are parallel, and not sequels, is their genealogies (Gen 4:1+1 7-22; Gen 4:25-6). The Stories of Cain and Abel now separate the Stories of Adam and Eve from their original genealogy. In this genealogy, Seth is the first child, and Seth's first child is Enosh (Gen 2:25--3:24+4:25-6). In the original genealogy for the stories of Cain and Abel, the first child is Cain, and Cain's first child is Enoch (Gen 4:17).

Like the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth and the Stories of Adam and Eve, a sterility affidavit opens the Stories of Cain and Abel. Also like these parallels, the stories of Cain and Abel close with the birth of a child.

3) The End of Days

Few English translations give the sterility affidavit (Hebrew: qes hayyamim) with which the Stories of Cain and Abel open the emphasis it needs to be understood as the opening of a creation story. They do not set the phrase off with a new paragraph division or a subtitle to emphasize that it is the beginning of a new story. Most simply render it as a temporal adverb like "...sometime later."

Grammatically, for the Stories of Cain and Abel to begin with the phrase: “When the days of grazing were done” (Gen 4:3), the initial verb should be a qatal form of the verb. It is not. Hence the tradition of beginning the Stories of Cain and Abel with the words: “Now the man knew his wife Eve…” (Gen 4:1), where the verb is a qatal, appears to be more grammatically solid. But the impersonal use of wayhi in a temporal phrase, as it is used here, regularly marks the beginning of an episode.

The Hebrew words: qes hayyamim in the Stories of Cain and Abel should be translated as a sterility affidavit opening a creation story. For example, the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth begins “When Elohim began to create…” (Gen 1:1), and the Enuma Elish Stories begin “When on high, no heaven had been named…..”

The book of Daniel (Dan 2:28; 10:14; 12:13) uses qes hayyamim as "the end of days." The connotation of the phrase, even though it is not used as a sterility affidavit in the book of Daniel, is that the Old World is coming to an end and a New World is being created. Therefore, qes hayyamim in the Stories of Cain and Abel would be better translated: “When the days of grazing were done, and the days of farming came to an end…”

The "end of days" was the time to bring in the harvest and to shear the sheep. When the sheep were sheared the season or the Old World was over. Herders then inaugurated a New World by planning for the coming breeding and grazing season. Farmers decommissioned the
Old World by harvesting their crops and inaugurated a new world by planning for the coming growing season. The end of days was the time to pay debts and to borrow to breed new herds, access new grazing land, obtain seed to plant and rent fields to sow.125

The Stories of Cain and Abel open at the threshing floor and shearing field. It is the end of days. Farming and herding has ended. A new season is beginning. The sacrifices of Cain and Abel are ratifying the covenants that they have negotiated for seed to plant and animals to breed.

4) Patterns in the Stories of Cain and Abel

1) Crisis: “When the days were done…” (Hebrew: qes hayyamim (Gen 4:3-7)
2) Climax: “Then (Hebrew: we-) Cain called out to his brother…” (Gen 4:8)
3) Denouement: “So (Hebrew: we-), Yahweh summoned Cain...” (Gen 4:9)
   a) Farm the land (Gen 4:9-16)
   b) Twin endowments
      i) Bear children (Gen 4:17)
      ii) Build cities (Gen 4:17)
   c) Twin endowments
      i) Make tents (Gen 4:18-21)
      ii) Herd
   d) Twin endowments
      i) Play stringed music (Gen 4:21)
      ii) Play wind music
   e) Twin endowments
      i) Work bronze (Gen 4:22)
      ii) Work iron
   f) Twin endowments
      i) Administer legal justice (Gen 4:19-24)
      ii) Worship Yahweh (Gen 4:25-6)
   g) Make trade (Gen 5:1-32)

b. Farming and Herding

The sacrifices of Abel and Cain are comparable, not contrasting.126 Both offer sacrifice to Yahweh. The stories are not contrasting paganism with orthodoxy or polytheism with monotheism.127

The stories also do not contrast blood sacrifice with bloodless sacrifice.128 Cain's sacrifice is no less appropriate for a farmer than is Abel's sacrifice for a herder.129 Both bring the offerings that are appropriate, and both expect that their offerings will guarantee a good year to come.

Nothing in the story itself conclusively suggests that Cain is any less generous than Abel.130 "An offering of the fruit of the ground..." and "...the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions..." are the standard expressions in the Bible for the sacrifices of farmers and herders.131
The phrase: "their fat portions (Gen 3:4)" does not privilege the sacrifice of Abel over the sacrifice of Cain. All sacrifices must be the best or "fat portions".132

Yahweh talks with Cain about life as a farmer.133 “Why are you mourning? Why have you lost face? Hold up your head whether it is a good year for you or bad. Sin is a snake -- a demon at the door. Its instinct is to strike out at you, but you can master it.”134

Cain is not plotting to murder Abel. Cain is allowing his crop failure, to make him resent his fertility, and want to give up his life as a farmer. When harvests are full, humans celebrate their ability to have a child and to have a harvest. When harvests fail, humans mourn their fertility.135 Both the Stories of Adam and Eve, and the Stories of Cain and Abel encourage humans to embrace their ability to have a child and to have a harvest despite the labor which both require. The fertile know the good of having a child and having a harvest requires the evil of labor (Gen 3:5).

The snake that tutors the man and the woman the Stories of Adam and Eve, also tutors the household of Cain.136 She is more a teacher, than a tempter. She teaches humans that fertility demands labor. The Stories of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:14) identify their snake with one Hebrew word (Hebrew: nahas), and the Stories of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:7) use another (Hebrew: robes), but the two words are comparable.137 These snakes guard thresholds to remind those who go out of the household that human life is demanding. The household is like a womb that protects its members. Once humans cross the threshold, snakes remind them that they must labor to survive. The words of Yahweh remind Cain that bad seasons are as much a part of farming life as good seasons.138

In order to survive, farmers must be able to hold their heads up and go out of the doors of their houses into the fields even after the crops have failed. It is the responsibility of the snake at the door to remind them that crop failure is always possible. If farmers cannot face, and overcome, the fear of failure, then they cannot endure the labor of bringing in the harvest.139

The conversation between Yahweh and Cain is amicable, not hostile. Cain accepts Yahweh’s advice and returns to his life as a farmer. There is no reason to assume that Cain is venting his anger against Yahweh or Abel. Creation always begins with chaos. The crop failure that opens the Stories of Cain and Abel open describes the chaos in place when Cain begins to create.

c. Crop Failure

The soil, not an inscrutable Yahweh, “...favored Abel for his offering, but ignored Cain and his offering” (Gen 4:4-5). Cain reacts to crop failure with a human sacrifice, rather than murder (Gen 4:8).

English translations regularly read: "...and Yahweh favored Abel for his offering, but ignored the offering of Cain (Gen 4:4)" which invites a painful theology portraying Yahweh as choosing Abel and rejecting Cain without reason.140 A better reading would be: "...and the land favored Abel for his offering, but ignored Cain and his offering." Like its parallels, the intention
of this story is: "Why is it so difficult for human beings to survive?" What makes life difficult for human beings is not that Yahweh, on a whim, curses one household and blesses another, but simply that Abel the herder has a good year, while Cain the farmer has a bad year. Crop failure, and not divine caprice, causes humans to suffer. The source of the crisis here is not divine whim, but unpredictable weather.

A standard harvest in early Israel produced ten to fifteen times the grain that was needed to plant it. Positive changes in the quality of the land, the number of farmers available, and the way in which they worked could increase the standard harvest, yet there was always a greater risk that negative changes could destroy the economy of the village and its households. Fields that produced as little as a ten to fifteen fold harvest in good years typically failed altogether in three years out of ten. It is not just Yahweh who has no regard for Cain, but the land that fails to produce an adequate harvest for his household.

Although there is little difference in the world of the Bible between the divine patron of a household and the land of its divine patron which the household works, using the word "Yahweh" instead of the word "land" in English translations makes an important difference in the way we understand the story today. Good years and bad years make sense to us. Divine caprice does not.

Elsewhere, the Stories of Cain themselves read "land" and "Yahweh" as parallels. In a denouement episode Cain says to Yahweh: "Today you are driving me away from the land, and I shall be hidden from your face…” (Gen 4:14) If Cain leaves the land, he leaves Yahweh as well. The words "land" and "Yahweh" here are synonyms, and it would be better to read "land" than "Yahweh" in the crisis episode as well. The connotations of the crisis episode are not that Yahweh is capricious in accepting the sacrifice of Abel, and rejecting the sacrifice of Cain, but rather that even though both households offer acceptable sacrifices at the beginning of the growing and herding seasons, Abel has a good year, but Cain does not. The soil is good to Abel and produces enough for his flock to graze, but the soil is bad for Cain and does not produce for his fields and vineyards.

The crisis episode closes by moving from the beginning of growing season to the end of it. The harvest of Cain has failed. Cain has lost face. The narrative structure of the story also emphasizes the parallel between "...seeing Yahweh" and "...having a harvest". In the crisis episode Cain offers sacrifice in the sight of Yahweh at the beginning of the growing season, and in the denouement Cain leaves the sight of Yahweh at the time of the harvest. The consequences that Yahweh explains to Cain in the denouement reverse Cain's first action. Cain is not only banished from the face of the earth, but also from the sight of Yahweh. The first action places Cain within the sight of Yahweh, in the later action Cain is banished from the sight of Yahweh. The first action Cain establishes a relationship with Yahweh, but the last threatens to destroy it.

**d. Risk Sharing**

Conflict between farmers and herders first appears after the industrial revolution that began about 1848 in Europe. The introduction of steam and water-powered machines created an
opposition between cities and farms very different from the economy of the world of the Bible. The economy of Syria-Palestine during the Bronze Age and the Iron Age was dimorphic. Villages combined both farming and herding. Cities and villages were part of the same, not different, economic systems. Likewise, the economy of village as a producer of raw materials was linked to the economy of cities as manufacturers and distributors. Villages and cities cooperated with each other in the production and distribution of goods. They were partners, not competitors. 148

e. Human Sacrifice

Cain the farmer turns his attention to the challenge of fertilizing the soil. He prepares to wet the soil with blood to create a fertile field. 149

In the world of the Bible, death comes, not when the heart stops beating or the brain stops transmitting. Death comes only when things are dry. In the Creation of a New People from Dry Bones (Ezek 37:1-14) Ezekiel sees a battlefield carpeted with the dry, unburied bones of the soldiers of Judah. As dawn lifts, a gentle breeze moistens these dry bones with dew, and they rise from the dead.

The practice of secondary burial also demonstrates that only the moist are alive, whereas the dry are dead. Primary burial allows the bodies of the dead to dry. Until all the wet parts of the body have decayed, the dead are considered still present in the household. Once, however, the bones are dry, they are harvested and disposed in an ossuary or stacked in piles in the household cave.

Cain's actions in the climax episode also parallel the climax episode in the Story of Adam and Eve as Herders and Child-bearers (Gen 3:6). In both stories the people primeval are learning how to create or to do what the creator does, and in both stories they are moderately successful. They do create, but they discover the painful lesson that human creativity demands labor. In the Stories of Adam and Eve, Eve must labor to give birth and Adam must labor to farm. They must give up their lives to create life. They lay down their lives for another. Cain also discovers human mortality: Abel must die in order that Cain can farm.

To restore the structure of his household so that it can once again feed and protect its members, Cain humbles the household by sacrificing Abel, the herder who stands alone between the household and starvation. By the sacrifice of Abel, Cain places the survival of his household completely in the hands of Yahweh. Assuming that the death of Abel is a sacrifice, and not a murder, reconfigures the way Augustine understood the components of the story.

At the beginning of the growing season described in the crisis episode, Cain offered a grain sacrifice expecting that grain sacrificed would bring a grain harvest. It did not. What was lacking was rain. The seed was good, but the soil was dry. Therefore, Cain moistens the soil with the blood of Abel expecting that bloodshed would bring rain.

There is a close link in the story between the farmer (Hebrew: adam), the farmland (Hebrew: adamah) and blood (Hebrew: dam). 151 When the land is dry, the link between the
farmer and the farmland is destroyed. Cain restores his relationship with the land by wetting it with the blood of Abel. Only life can give life. In the Stories of Adam and Eve, the woman lays down her life to give life to Cain and Abel. In the Stories of Cain and Abel, Cain lays down the life of Abel to give life to the farmland.

The sacrifice of Abel is also a ritual of status reversal. To reestablish the hierarchy of the household of Cain necessary to survive, Cain humbles his household by putting Abel, its most valuable asset to death. This cosmogony describes a labor that humbles or cripples the household of Cain by voluntarily depriving it of its herder. The sacrifice of Abel is an act of humiliation.

Cain has concluded that the land failed because his household was still too arrogant -- too confident, that it could do a divine work like farming. Arrogance prevents human fertility. Only the humble prosper. Therefore, Cain alters the status of his household by sacrificing the herder, whose livestock are its insurance against starvation when crops fail. By sacrificing Abel, Cain places his household in complete dependence upon its divine patron for survival. Cain takes Abel into the field, just as he brings the fruit of the land to Yahweh. The killing of Abel is a ritual act that takes place on the infertile land. It is not an impulsive murder instigated by jealousy, but a human sacrifice intended to fertilize the soil by drenching it with the blood of Abel.

1) Human Sacrifice in Mediterranean Cultures

Human sacrifice was an established social institution in Mediterranean cultures in antiquity. Walter Burkert, Rene Girard and Jon D. Levenson have written seminal works on human sacrifice.

In Homo Necans: the anthropology of ancient Greek sacrificial ritual and myth published in 1972 in Germany, Walter Burkert studies human sacrifice in Hellenistic or western Mediterranean cultures. He argues that it is connected with the evolution of humans as hunters. Sacrifice processes the guilt which humans experience in killing fellow animals. It allows human to deify their victims as an act of reconciliation for killing them, and to reaffirm their common bond as fellow animals.

In Violence and the Sacred also published in 1972, but in France, Rene Girard also studies western Mediterranean cultures. He argues that sacrifice is the strategy which religion uses to control the aggression or competition that consistently threatens to destroy the community necessary for survival. Religion focuses this aggression on a single member of the community. By sacrificing one human being the community vents its hostility, thereby protecting other members of the community. Once the victims are dead, they are often deified, as an act of restitution. The portion served to each household during the meal following the sacrifice reestablishes the social structure that was threatened by the violence neutralized by the sacrifice.

Paul Mosca, “Child Sacrifice in Canaanite and Israelite Religion: a study in Mulk and Mlk” (1975) and George C. Heider, The Cult of Molek: a reassessment (1985) have both done extensive comparative studies on child sacrifice. START HERE
In The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: the transformation of child sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity published in 1993, Jon D. Levenson studies human sacrifice in ancient Israel and early Christianity. He argues that the firstborn son is Yahweh’s: “You shall give me the first-born among your sons.” (Exod 22:28) Yahweh can ask for the firstborn son to be sacrificed, or for an animal to be substituted, or for a vow of celibacy to be substituted. The fathers of most households did not have to sacrifice their beloved sons, but some did. Abraham knew it was his turn when he heard Yahweh order the sacrifice of Isaac. Jephthah knew it when it was his only child who met him at his home on that day of triumph turned to tragedy. Mesha knew that, when all earthly strategy failed to break Israel’s siege of Moab, only a human sacrifice could reverse the dire situations.

2) Human Sacrifice in the Social Scientific Study of Religion

The work of Burkert, Girard and Levenson each offer intriguing patterns for understanding the killing of Abel as a sacrifice, but the work of Eliade and Turner offer better parallels for understanding the sacrifice of Abel as a human imitation of a divine act of creation, and ritual of reversal. In The Sacred and the Profane: the nature of religion published in 1959 Mircea Eliade argues that in traditional societies all human behavior is ritual, and that all human behavior imitates the behavior of the divine patrons who created their world and them. To be effective, to be life producing, humans must do what their divine patrons have done.

In The Ritual Process: structure and anti-structure published in 1969, Victor Turner argues that in order to preserve the structure of a society so that it can continue to feed and protect its members, those social structures need to be periodically deconstructed. In the resulting chaos that Turner calls “anti-structure” or “communitas” there is no structure. The first are last. The last are first. The rich are poor. The poor are rich. Such rituals of reversal bleed the pressure which social structures or hierarchies cause, and prevent these societies from permanently being destroyed.

3) Human Sacrifice in ANE Creation Stories

Nintu-Mami's sacrifice of Wei-la in the Atrahasis Stories provides a helpful parallel for understanding the killing of Abel as a sacrifice, rather than as a murder. The Stories of Atrahasis begin in a world populated only by divine warriors (Akkadian: iggigi) and elders (Akkadian: anunnaki). Eventually the warriors revolt, refusing to do all the work that is necessary to keep their world running properly. Ea-Enki negotiates a settlement with them, in which workers (Akkadian: lullu) will be created to take care of the world, especially by dredging its canals. The elders ratify Ea-Enki's proposal, but assign Nintu-Mami the actual task of carrying out the project.

I:192-5

"Summon Nintu, the divine midwife!
Let her create workers to labor for the divine assembly."
So, the divine assembly summoned Nintu-Mami,
They called the wise woman before them.
"Midwife the lullu," they commanded,
"Create workers to labor for us.
Let the lullu bear the yoke,
Let them work for Enlil,
Let them labor for the divine assembly."

The Stories of Atrahasis describe the labor of Nintu-Mami with several different accounts of how the task was carried out. One account compares Ea-Enki with a menstruating woman, who bathes three times during the menstrual cycle: first when the new moon appears, then seven days later, and finally fourteen days later when the full moon appears. Intercourse is described as the mixing of the body of Ea-Enki, with the blood of We-ila.

I:200-30

Nintu said to the divine assembly: "I cannot do Ea-Enki's work.
Only Ea-Enki has the clay to create."
Ea-Enki spoke: "I will bathe to mark my time . . .
At the new moon, the seventh day, and the full moon, I will wash.
Let the divine assembly sacrifice We-ila.
Let them bathe in his blood.
Let Nintu thin my clay with his blood.
Let Nintu mix clay with blood, the human with the divine.
Let the drum mark off the days,
Count down the time.
Let We-ila's blood give these workers life,
Let the midwife call out to them: 'Live!'"
The divine assembly agreed,
The anunnaki elders consented.

In the creation stories of the ancient Near East, life comes from life. The life of We-ila becomes the life of the lullu. The play on words is intentional. The “lullu” are from “We-ila”. Similarly, the life of Eve becomes the life of Cain and Abel. The life of Abel becomes the life of the household of Cain.

The cosmogony opens when Cain “calls out” (Hebrew: wayyomer). The words are a call to worship which signals that an act of creation is about to take place.

It would also be better to translate: "...Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him" with the same liturgical language which describes Abraham as he prepares to sacrifice Isaac: “Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.” (Gen 22:10) Just as Abraham reaches out his hand and takes the knife to sacrifice his beloved son, Cain reaches out his hand and takes the knife to sacrifice Abel.

Just like Nintu-Mami, Cain mixes blood with soil. The blood of Wei-la is necessary to moisten the clay, the blood of Abel is necessary to moisten or given life to the soil. Human
sacrifice is a sympathetic or imitative ritual. With imitative rituals humans model what they need the earth to do. By raining the blood of Abel into the soil, Cain invites the earth to moisten the soil with rain. Rain, semen, tears, blood and saliva are interchangeable thinners that appear in ancient Near Eastern creation stories. The mixing of something solid – clay, with something liquid – rain, semen, tears, blood or saliva, is the formula for life.

4) Human Sacrifice in Mesoamerican Cultures

Another set of parallels for understanding the death of Abel as a sacrifice can be found in Mesoamerican cultures.

Tlaloc is the divine patron of nature in Aztec culture. Tlaloc feeds the Aztecs, with her children, and, in turn, the Aztecs fed Tlaloc with the bodies of their children. The Aztecs eat the produce of Tlaloc, and Tlaloc eats the children of the Aztecs.

The ritual of Atl Caualo celebrated to end of the dry season acknowledges the reciprocity that only life creates life. “Atl Caualo literally means ‘water left’ or ‘drought’. The ritual was performed at the end of the dry season to pray for enough rain to ensure successful harvest.”

The Aztecs sacrificed their children at significant places in nature – water sources, fertile fields -- where Tlaloc sacrificed her children for the Aztecs. Wherever there were openings or mouths in the body of Tlaloc, the Aztecs offered sacrifice. The creation stories of the Aztecs explain that for Tlaloc to be able to release life-giving power, she had to be dismembered. In order to give birth, she had to be split in two.

The Aztecs tell how their creators -- Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca -- change into great snakes. Quetzalcoatl takes Tlaloc’s right hand and left foot and Tezcatlipoca takes her left hand and right foot and they tear her in two. From one hand Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca created earth from one hand and foot, and the heavens from the other hand and foot. To compensate Tlaloc for her suffering, the divine assembly ordained that humans could eat only the food that her body could produce. From Tlaloc’s hair they made trees, flowers and plants. From her skin and its tiny hairs they made small plants and flowers. From many eyes, they made the springs and fountains and caves. From her mouths, they made the rivers and great caverns. From her nose, they made the valleys and mountains.

Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca may be attacking and dismembering Tlaloc, but it is also possible that they are her midwives. They take her arms as she as her legs split and she gives birth to the earth. The violence here may be murder, but it may also be labor.

Human sacrifice is a re-enactment of the labor that gave birth to the earth. Mothers, like Mother Earth, labor to bring forth their children. “Elements of the material world were seen as evidence of comogonic violence; there, at points in the landscape body, direct communication with Tlaloc’s body could be achieved by sacrificial violence. Killing was the regenerative act within an eating landscape formed from an original violence.” Earthquakes and volcanoes create by the shifting of the earth’s tectonic plates to shape the geography of the earth were
considered to be the writhing of a woman in labor. Therefore, the Aztecs bring their children to the place where Tlaloc gave birth to her children.

Human sacrifice in Aztec culture saw a parallel between rain and blood. Blood “…is a bodily water and the basis of human life.” Rain “…is an earthly or heavenly blood and logically the basis of Tlaloc or the landscape’s life. The reciprocal nature of life and death was a central element in most of Aztec religious life. The ritual acquisition of water required paying high price in children’s blood, which offset the cost of the sacrifice given by Tlaloc.” 166

The reaction to the shedding of human blood is weeping – a ritual rain. “Ritual weeping and sorrow over the deaths of these children were the emotional impetus that resulted in rainfall.”167

The longstanding tradition of interpretation that understands the Stories of Cain and Abel as requiring a blood sacrifice may, in some way, still be relevant. But the distinction is that Abel offers produce of the land, just as Cain does. In the world of the Aztecs, neither would be appropriate. Livestock and grain are both gifts of the land to humans. To return them does not repay them. What Cain does is to repay with a human life, the life which nature gives to support human life.

Applies Jonathan Z. Smith, To Take Place: toward theory in ritual and Claude Levi-Strauss, "all sacred things must have their place".168

Ritual bring place to life -- geography is alive, and changes as humans use ritual to interact with place. Ritual draws borders, and thus creates cosmos from chaos which is borderless.

Carrasco applies three models of space to Aztec culture: omphalos (Eliade), locative (Smith) and utopian (Smith), and proposes his own: "Sacred space and ceremonial landscapes in Aztec ceremonies expand and retract, meander and transform, link and fold into one another in a metamorphic vision of place,' or to add to Smith's spectrum, the motion and movement of Aztec rituals suggest the title 'To Change Place.'" (33)

People change places, the places are transformed by hierophanies, and the humans are momentarily and ultimately changed.(33)

Cain sacrifices Abel to change the land from infertile to fertile, and to change his household from infertile to fertile.

f. Law and Order

The denouement of the Stories of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:9-16) is not just a sentence for a crime or a punishment for sin. Labor is life, not a life sentence for humans. Like the denouement in the stories of Adam and Eve, it is a covenant legislating the terms for life in the new world. In both stories, human creativity demands labor that distinguishes it from divine creativity.
Creation stories propose that human labor was an act of self-sacrifice by the people primeval who freely chose to lay down their lives, rather than to remain immortal and to live forever.

There is judicial language in the Stories of Cain and Abel, but it is not so much the language of a trial, as the language of negotiation. Yahweh is not so much a judge who arraigns and charges Cain, who then as a defendant legally defends himself against the indictment. Yahweh is a sovereign negotiating the stipulations of a covenant with a vassal. Cain's astuteness as a negotiating partner appears in both his use of words and the keen sense of the bond that unites humans with their work.

Cain describes Abel as a grazer (Hebrew: ro'eh) of sheep and protests that he is not a keeper (Hebrew: somer) of Abel (Gen 4:9). Although the Hebrew words for "grazer" and "keeper" are different, storytellers play on the words. Cain asks Yahweh: "Am I the shepherd's (Hebrew: ro'eh) shepherd (Hebrew: somer)?" Cain's point is that when crops fail, it is the shepherds who feed the village. Shepherds take care of farmers. Farmers do not take care of shepherds.169

Cain’s response is also a separation or divorce formula similar to “You are not my wife” or “You are not our son.” When Yahweh asks: "Where is your brother Abel?" (Gen 4:9), Cain answers: “Abel is not my brother.”170

Like the man and the woman in the stories of Adam and Eve, Cain seemingly denies his sacrifice. But neither the response of the man and the woman, nor the response of Cain may be simply lies to avoid punishment. The responses may also be demurs with which humans are expected to respond to the recognition that they have led their households from infertility to fertility. For Cain to celebrate his sacrifice of Abel would only reaffirm the arrogance which the sacrifice of Abel removed from his household in the first place. When asked: "Are you taking care of your brother?" Cain responds, "On the contrary, it is Abel who must take care of us."

Yahweh's reaction to the killing of Abel is not the reaction of a judge to a crime. Cain (Gen 4), Abimelech (Judg 9), Absalom (2 Sam 13), Solomon (2 Kgs 2) and Jehoram (2 Chr 21) all kill their brothers. Strangely, none is tried for murder under the law of retaliation (Exod 20:13; 21:12; Deut 19:4-13). Blood vengeance was not only legal in ancient Israel, it was practiced (2 Sam 14; Judg 8; 2 Sam 2-3; 2 Kgs 14:5; 2 Sam 16). Early Christian teachers and Jewish rabbis occasionally argued that there was no penalty for murder until Cain murdered Abel. Cain could not be punished according to a law that was adopted only after his crime.171 They also explained that Yahweh pardoned Cain outright as an expression of divine mercy. Some even suggested that part of the untold story is that Cain was given probation, rather than a death sentence, because he repented.

Anthropological studies offer another reason for the exception. In traditional African cultures, fratricide is often treated differently than murder. Murder is considered a tort, which requires compensation, rather than a crime that requires punishment. Generally, murder outside the household is punished according to the norms of the law of talion that requires that a life be given for a life. A murderer is sentenced to death. But the sentence may be executed in more than one way. The death sentence may be imposed on the actual murderer, or on any other member of
the murderer's household. The death sentence may also be commuted to a fine of livestock, a human being physically comparable to the victim, or a woman who will bear a child for the victim's household.

Initially, murder inside the household is dealt with differently than murder outside the household. In some cases, murder inside the household is considered more heinous than murder. But in general society recognizes that the household has already been hurt by the murder, and would not be compensated, but only further damaged, by punishing it with a death sentence or a fine. Hence, households are allowed to settle the matter as quickly and satisfactorily as possible. In ancient Israel, murders inside the household were settled in a variety of ways. The exile of Cain is only one example. Eventually murders inside the household are punished exactly as murders outside the household (Gen 9:5).

The household of Cain has changed from being infertile to fertile. It has gone from being a household without a harvest to becoming a household preparing to harvest. Yahweh intervenes, not to punish the household of Cain, but, like a midwife, to be its companion, and prepare it to face the labor that such human creativity demands. Both Adam and Cain will curse the soil, Adam because it eats his life away one day at a time, Cain because it drinks his brother's blood. 

Both Adam and Cain supplement farming with foraging. The covenant which Yahweh promulgates for Cain in the new world stipulates that the household of Cain will survive by foraging (Hebrew: nawa) and scavenging (Hebrew: nadah) to supplement its farming in the land of Nod, the land of wandering or foraging (Hebrew: nad). So the covenant allows the household of Cain to farm, but not without great difficulty. This covenant is not a punishment (Hebrew: 'awoni); it is an obligation.

Cain protests the initial terms that Yahweh proposes. He argues that they are simply impossible for his household to fulfill. For Cain the covenant that Yahweh proposes is a death sentence. Farmers hunt human scavengers like animal predators. If Yahweh requires the household of Cain to forage and scavenge, his household is as good as dead.

Yahweh concedes. The stipulation remains in place, but the household of Cain is placed under divine protection. The mark on Cain is an apotropaic mark or tattoo that warns all who meet the members of his household that Yahweh is their divine patron (Exod 13:6, 28: 36; Deut 6:8, 11:18; Ezek 9:4-6). 

The concession that the household of Cain negotiates with Yahweh is preserved as a case law (Gen 4:15). "Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." The relative clause indicts the defendant for the murder of Cain; the main clause sentences the defendant to seven counts of vengeance (Hebrew: naqam).

The New World needs new people and a new city. The denouement of the Stories of Cain and Abel promulgate the covenant founding a New World, the creation of the first people and the building of the first city. Therefore, Cain's wife delivers a child and Cain's son, Enoch, builds a city.
Storytellers stress the connection between childbearing and city building by giving both the child and the city the same name: "Irad." Irad corresponds to Mesopotamian "Eridu," the first city built before the flood according the Sumerian King List.177 Cain's departure from the Old World brings life to a New World – the birth of a child and the building of a city.

The household of Cain, like the seven great teachers (Akkadian: apkallu) in Mesopotamian tradition, endows humanity with all the skills of civilization. Cain or Kenan is the first teacher; Enoch is the second. Irad or Jared is the third teacher; Mehuyael or Mahalalel is the fourth. Methushael or Methusalah is fifth teacher; Lamech the sixth and Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain are the seventh.178

The genealogy of Lamech (Gen 4:18-24) needs to be read as emphasizing the increasing fertility of this new world, not the continuing decay of the old.179 Therefore, the denouement describes how Cain with just one wife gives birth to one child, who gives birth to one child, who gives birth to one child, who gives birth to one child. For five generations, the new world has a stable, but not an expanding population. Then comes Lamech. Lamech marries twin wives: Adah and Zillah. The hard times with which the Stories of Cain and Abel began are over and primeval fertility begins to blossom once again (Gen 4:3). These twin wives each give birth to twins. Jabal and Jubal are identical twin boys.180 Tubalcain, a boy and Naamah, a girl, are fraternal twins. The population of the world is no longer threatened, it is booming.

In creation stories, the endowment of population always comes with the endowment of technology. The twins, Jabal and Jubal, are as creative as their mother. Each gift the new world with twin technologies. Jabal invents tent making and herding. Jubal invents the music of stringed instruments and wind instruments. The twins Tubalcain and Naamah are not outdone. They gift the new world with the twin technologies of working bronze and working iron.181 Although commentaries often consider Tubalcain the sole inventor of metalworking, it is more likely that just as both Jabal and Jubal share in endowing the new world with new skills, Tubalcain and Naamah do the same.

Endowments in creation stories are not simply interested in new technologies, they are also interested in new social institutions. It is more consistent with this pattern of a creation story to consider Lamech as the Hammurabi of the stories of Cain and Abel who promulgates a new legal code, than as a bloodthirsty and raving maniac. As part of the marriage covenant, a husband must agree to protect and provide for his wife. Lamech promises his wives protection eleven times greater than that which Yahweh promised Cain. His words are not a confession to murder, but a promise that anyone who threatens the household of Lamech is as good as dead.

The qal verb here in Hebrew should not be translated as "...I have killed (Gen 4:23)," but "...I will kill" in order to express certainty, not past action. It emphasizes a vivid future in which the action is viewed as good as done. A similar use of this verb form appears in the book of Numbers (Num 17:27/MT or 17:12/Eng) and the book of Isaiah (Isa 5:13, 42:1). Although the perfect is most commonly used to express action that is actually completed, or thought by the speaker or writer to be completed, in some instances, the certainty of an imminent event in the mind of the speaker is enough to justify the use of the perfect. This usage of the perfect is
especially common in prophecies, promises, and threats. In such cases, one should render the Hebrew perfect by the English present or future. 182

Lamech's threats are directed, not just at "men (Hebrew: 'is)" and "boys (Hebrew: yeled)." They are directed at the elders who sit in the village assembly, and the warriors that the village musters to answer the tribe's call to arms. The elders are old; the warriors are young. The virtue of the elders is experience in use of law to resolve internal conflicts. The virtue of the warriors is the use of force to protect their households from external dangers. Men in every village are assigned to one of these two categories. Lamech promises the women of his household that they will be safe from both legal and physical injury.

With the marriage of Lamech, the insecurity of the old world which so frightened Cain has given way to the ultimate security of the new world in which the penalties for crimes are so severe that no one dares to commit one. While the vengeance system of justice often seems anything but civilized to audiences today, it was and still is a standard and effective form of social control. Vengeance in the world of the Bible is by no means wanton. The avenger and the criminal are both clearly identified. And it is not necessarily more violent than today's system of imprisonment and capital punishment.

Yahweh protects Cain with a tattoo. Lamech protects his wives with weapons of metal. In the old world, only Yahweh the creator can protect Cain. Now in the new world, humans can use the technology of metal working and the social institution of the vengeance system to protect themselves. Because of metalworking and the vengeance system of justice, life is more possible, not less possible. The sense of the phrase generally translated as "At that time men began... (Gen 4:26)" is better rendered as "...just as." "Just as..." the household Jabal invented the tent and domesticated cattle, and the household of Jubal invented music, the household of Enosh was the first to call its divine patron by the name "Yahweh." 183

The Story of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel are not sequels demonstrating the spread of sin, but parallels celebrating the founding of a new world, where humans can give life. It is the soil, not Yahweh, “...which had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering it had no regard” (Gen 4:4-5). Cain sacrifices, rather than murders Abel (Gen 4:8), much as Abraham had intended to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:21:33–22:19). Yahweh protects Cain from the consequences of his actions (Gen 4:15-16), just as Yahweh protects Abraham. These stories do not indict Cain for cursing humanity with murder, but rather celebrate Cain for blessing humanity with endowments like cities, tent making, herding, music, metal work, and, eventually a system of justice seventy-seven times more efficient than the mark with which Yahweh tattooed Cain to protect him from his enemies. The Stories of Cain are part of a tradition celebrating the evolution of human beings from living to life giving. The Stories of Adam and Eve and the Stories of Cain and Abel argue that only by laying down lives can humans create life. Mortality enters the world either through the self-sacrifice of Eve or through the human sacrifice of Abel. Without death, there is no life. It was a teaching to which Jesus and the Jewish martyrs would return.
Further Reading


Two brothers are rivals for the favor a divine monarch. the one offered the finest gift he can make; the other's gift is of middling quality. When the king makes known his displeasure with the latter, he also informs him that he is free to make amends and achieve restoration to favor; he warns him, however, that freedom of will makes him vulnerable to the demonic temptation of wrongdoing. The admonition is all too prophetic: the offender who began with niggardliness to this master now moves from petulance to murder. In the murderer's response to the question as to his brother's whereabouts, the author provides an exquisite insight into the psychology of the immoralist: he is one who rejects responsibility for his fellow.


Studies Hellenistic or western Mediterranean cultures to argue that sacrifice is connected with the evolution of humans as hunters. Sacrifice processes the guilt which humans experience in killing fellow animals. It allows human to deify their victims as an act of reconciliation for killing them, and to reaffirm their common bond as fellow animals.


Demonstrates work of E. Leach that humans use a limited number of structural patterns in telling creation stories, and that these patterns are transformed using a limited number of rules with stories of Adam and Eve and the stories of Cain and Abel. In both roles and results are reversed, and endogamy destroys culture, which exogamy creates culture. So Abel sacrifices a sheep which is accepted by Yahweh, yet dies. Then Cain sacrifices Abel who is rejected by Yahweh and lives.


Compares the elaborative renderings of the Palestinian Targums at Gen 4:8, first of all to one another. Similarities and differences are identified in respect of wording, theme, and above all, structure are a model for analyzing the Beelzebub controversy in the Gospels (Mk 3:22-27 and parallels).

Identifies the tradition as "Cain's Murder of Abel" in J which continues the stories of Adam and Eve. Although Clifford carefully corelates the stories of Cain and Abel with the Sumerian King List, he nonetheless argues that they "...illustrate both the spreading effect of human sin and God's undiminsted commitment to the blessing (14)."


Personality sketch of Cain in light of Karen Horney's description of neurotic functioning. Cain corresponds to the "moving against," expansive neurotic type of Horney's three directional model. Cain chose this mode of functioning as a means of solving his own interpersonal difficulties and as an attempt to satisfy the needs of his idealized self-image.


Reads hit't trbs, 'sin will crouch,' with two taws expressed by a single one in an originally continuous Hebrew text without word divisions. Goes on to repoint the final phrase as a passive: 'And so you shall be ruled by it,' (we'atta timmesel-bah), rather that accepting it as it is and understanding an adversative waw, "but yet you may/should rule over it."


In traditional societies all human behavior is ritual, and that all human behavior imitates the behavior of the divine patrons who created their world and created them. To be effective, to be life producing, humans must do what their divine patrons have done


Rabbinical interpretations of the stories of Cain and Abel.


Sacrifice in western Mediterranean cultures is the strategy that religion uses to control human aggression or competition, which consistently threatens to destroy the community necessary for survival. Religion focuses this aggression on a single member of the community. By sacrificing one human being the community vents it hostility, thereby protecting any other members of the community. Once the victims are dead, they are often deified, as an act of restitution. The portion served to each household during the meal following the sacrifice reestablishes the social structure which was threatened by the violence neutralized by the sacrifice.


Claims divine paternity for Cain.

The tradition of interpretation that Cain's response to God's rejection of him and his offering was anger fails to reckon with Cain's fallen face, a symptom of depression rather than anger, or with biblical Hebrew's distinction between harah ap "be angry" and harah lo attested in Gen 4:5-6 in the sense "be depressed". The kinship between expressions for anger and depression in Hebrew and Akkadian, Cain's killing his brother, and the apparent lacuna in Gen 4:8 are accounted for by reference to psychoanalytic theory. The crux 'im tetib se'et is shown to mean "if you will make yourself happy, you will regain your smile".

Hallo 1987:3-14

Review of the standard theories of how sacrifice functions in traditional societies in general and Mesopotamia in particular. Contrary to the common practice of distinguishing between the Mesopotamian custom of offering sacrifices to feed the Gods and the Israelite custom of offering sacrifices to make peace or enjoy communion with Yahweh, H argues that originally both cultures offered sacrifice to authorize the eating of meat by human created as vegetarians. Subsequently both developed secondary purposes. Israel's aversion to anthropomorphic imagery for Yahweh diverged from the tradition of sacrifice as feeding.


The Stories of Cain and Abel have literary connections with the Stories of Adam and Eve. For example, Gen 4:16 speaks of the Garden of Eden.


Summary of etymological work on the Cain traditions.


Cain's failure to investigate the reason for God's rejection of his sacrifice is his sin.


Applies the concept of the Cain Complex to the autobiographical passages of the Pauline texts. The Cain Complex is derived from the writings of Leopold Szondi and defined as follows: the son who hates the brother and loves the father. The result of the study is to provide a psychological examination of a biblical figure that is different from psychoanalysis. It is claimed that the psychoanalytic view, based upon the Oedipus complex, cannot account for the autobiographical aspects of Pauline thought. The essay also provides an interpretation of Paul's illness, experience of sin, concept of conscience, and understanding of community.

Claims that Cain is divine (Gordon 1988:154-55) are not explicit in the present text. Nor do comparative studies prove a divine maternity (Kikawada 1971: 35-7). The association of the name Cain with the root qnh, 'to create' and 'to acquire,' leaves open two interpretations for the phrase; either Eve is acknowledging God at work through her in creation (or proudly claiming her own creative act [Cassuto 1961: 201; Westermann Genesis 1-11 BKAT, 395]) or she is recognizing God as the ultimate source of Cain (Wenham Genesis WBC, 102).

Speaks of "violence," rather than "original sin," but repeats Augustine’s tradition of interpretation. Summary of Robert R. Wilson, Genealogy and History in the Biblical World, but does not draw any parallels with the Sumerian King List, nor offer any suggestions for understanding the number of years attributed to each generation.


Review of rabbinical interpretations of stories of Cain and Abel. Critique of historical criticism which is interested only in how the stories were heard then, and not now, and only in this text, or the parts of this text, and not the text or the Bible as a whole.

Kugel, James L. "Why was Lamech blind?" Hebrew Annual Review 12 (1987): 91-103


In ancient Israel and early Christianity, the firstborn belongs to Yahweh’s: “You shall give Me the first-born among your sons.” (Exod 22:28) Yahweh can ask for the firstborn to be sacrificed, or for an animal to be substituted, or for a vow of celibacy to be substituted. The fathers of most households did not have to sacrifice their beloved sons, but some did. Abraham knew it was his turn when he heard Yahweh ordering the sacrifice of Isaac. Jephthah knew it when it was his only child who met him at his home on that day of triumph turned to tragedy. Mesha knew when all earthly strategy failed to break Israel’s siege and only the supreme sacrifice could reverse the dire situations.


Proper names like "Cain" as "...a sort of weapon (75)" and place names like "Nod" as "...tremor (86)" are examples of humor in Hebrew which is used to make fun of them or to indicate they are imaginary rather than real.


The Stories of Balaam associate the name Cain with the Kenites (Num 24:21-22). These people appear in the biblical text as smiths associate with the desert area of Israel's wanderings. Tubal-cain, the last-mentioned figure in the line of Cain not only possesses Cain's name but also is described as a smith. Sawyer's examinations of the line of Cain have led to other connections with the region of the Kenites.


In traditional African cultures, fratricide is often treated differently than murder. Murder is considered a tort, which requires compensation, rather than a crime which requires punishment. Generally, murder outside the household is punished according to the norms of the law of talion which requires that a life be given for a life. A murderer is sentenced to death. But the sentence may be executed in more than one way. The death sentence may be imposed on the actual murderer, or on any other member of the murderer's household. The death sentence may also be commuted to a fine of livestock, a human being physically comparable to the victim, or a woman who will bear a child for the victim's household.


War is the great rite of passage in which man equals hero; a woman cannot become a human being through, with, or for war. Women need peace for self-realization. From a feminist perspective the Stories of Cain and Abel mirror a peaceless anthropology based on the equation of human beings with men. The war against the poor today hits no one harder than the poorest of the poor, the women of the Third World with starvation, torture, and absolute poverty. For women to become conscious means to break with the values of patriarchy under which they were raised: militarism, use of violence, permanent preparation to exterminate others, first-strike mentality. "Women for Peace", an international peace organization, leads from the vaccinated peacelessness of "normal" life to consciously and militantly taking a stance for peace built on justice not on weaponry.


The approach to the problem of evil by Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swinburne, and John Hick is unsatisfactory. Properly interpreted, three Christian claims relevant to the problem: Adam fell; natural evil entered the world as a result of Adam's fall; and after death human beings go either to heaven or hell form a consistent and coherent Christian solution to the problem of evil.

To preserve the structure of a society so that it can continue to feed and protect its members, those social structures need to be periodically deconstructed. In the resulting chaos or “communitas” there is no structure. The first are last. The last are first. The rich are poor. The poor are rich. Such rituals of reversal bleed the pressure which social structures or hierarchies cause, and prevent these societies from permanently being destroyed.


Evangelical Christian interpretations of Gen 6:1-4. The human intermarriage view holds that the sons of God were descendants of Seth who intermarried with the female descendants of Cain. The sin was that of intermarriage. The dynastic kingship view, offered as a variant to the ancient Jewish interpretation, proposes that the sons of God were dynastic kings who claimed and were recognized to be "divine". Their sin was polygamy and that of their children was that they were ruthless. The article analyzes both views and concludes that the balanced contrast of "the sons of God" and "the daughters of man" on contextual and linguistic considerations argues in favor of the sons of God as angelic/preternatural beings who "fathered" human offspring, and thus originated a "super race". Demonic possession cannot be excluded. The flood is interpreted as a divine judgment on man's search for eternity (divinity). Man is doomed to a limited lifespan of 120 years maximum.


Distinguishes between Abel's offering of the 'first' and Cain's offering of 'some' (Cassuto 1961: 206-7; Sarna 1970:29; Waltke 1986; Wenham Genesis 1-15 WBC, 103-4).


Cain is tempted not to look at Abel eye to eye as a brother, but rather to hide himself from the eyes of Abel like an animal crouching to attack him. Yahweh looks on Abel, although he is "worthless" or weak, even though Cain, like most humans, ignore the weak. "Sin" and "serpent" are two nouns that both function as subject of the nominal sentence 7b.. In this sentence rabas is the second subject and the explanation or specification of the first subject: 'sin:' "...at the door is sin, the sin of lying in wait." 'Serpent' specifies the contents of 'sin': we are not concerned with a sinful deed in general, but with the specific, well defined sin of 'prowling' or 'lying in ambush for'.


Violence results from Cain as an archetype of the unaccepted Cain hating his unacceptance and being envious Abel as an archetype of the accepted. Psychologically, Cain and Abel are not two sons but one, and he is us. The unaccepted part of us hates its unacceptance and is envious of the accepted part of us. We seek acceptance and project that in the seeking the acceptance of our fathers and project that in seeking of the acceptance of our divine and human parents. Woods uses the relationship of sacrifice to violence proposed by Rene Girard to interpret the stories of Cain and Abel as a universal psychological profile.
Chapter 05

Middle Bronze Culture (2000-1550 B.C.E.) in the Song of Solomon (1150-587 B.C.E.)

What do erotic artifacts contribute to the understanding of the Song of Solomon?

The Song of Solomon belongs to the genre erotica. Cultures develop erotic traditions to teach men and women how to make love, and to motivate them to make love. Lovemaking is unique to its culture of origin. Seldom are the patterns of behavior established by one culture transferable to another. Therefore, erotica, like the Song of Solomon and the love songs of Egypt, teaches adults in the expected patterns of sexual behavior.

Sexual behavior is also among the most fragile activities in any culture. Sexual behavior can be interrupted by any number of physical, emotional, or psychological factors. Erotica motivates adults to engage in sexual activity, or to return to regular sexual activity after it has been interrupted.

Erotica is not pornography. Erotic traditions focus on healthy and balanced physical relationships. Pornography promotes violence against one sexual partner by the other. Pornography promotes physical abuse, not sexual relationships. Erotica develops from the boy-talk and girl-talk that take place in every culture. When groups of boys and girls or men and women get together, they inevitably talk about the attributes of the opposite sex. The daughters of Jerusalem who appear in the Song of Solomon are the women of the household with whom the singer speaks.

Sacred Marriage (hieros gamos)

Brooklyn Museum
305-30 B.C.E. (Ptolemaic Period)
Limestone
6.5x6 11/16x3.75 inches

Egyptians told and retold the Story of Isis and Osiris, which the Greeks adopted when they conquered Egypt in 333 B.C.E. The Brooklyn Museum preserves a limestone carving of the story. Artistically, the piece is extraordinary. Unlike traditional Egyptian art that portrays a single figure, this is a statue of a group. Unlike traditional Egyptian art that is meant to be viewed from a single angle, this statue can be viewed from any angle.
A priest with his hair combed to the side like the heir of a household plays the role of Osiris. He is having intercourse with Isis. As in traditional Egyptian art, his skin is red and her skin is white.

During their intercourse, other priests sacrifice an oryx. The oryx (*oryx leucoryx*) is an African antelope. It has long, straight or slightly curved horns and a hump above the shoulders.

The oryx was sacred to Satet, divine patron of the bow made from its horn. Satet appears as a woman wearing the white crown of southern Egypt and a pair of long antelope horns. She was the wife of Khnum, the divine potter, and joined Isis, to restore the fertility of Egypt’s farmland during time of the Nile flood. Satet also joined Hathor, the godmother, to bless human reproduction. Her main temple was on Abu Island at Aswan.

On the walls of the Birthing Room at Luxor, Satet watches Khnum, the divine potter, shape Amenophis III (1391-1353 B.C.E.) and his ka soul. She holds the ankh ready to bring the models to life. Elsewhere on the wall, Amenophis’ ka soul wearing the ka crown with two arms raised, waits for Amenophis to be born. Two divine midwives present both infants to Amun. The newborns are then nursed by divine nurses portrayed as cows, and blessed with life and prosperity by Heka and Hapy. (Lamy 1981: 25-26) The drawings are a creation story describing the virgin birth of Amenophis, and identifying him as the son of God.

**Egyptian Museum, Cairo**
**Ka Statue of Pharaoh Hor (1760 B.C.E.)**
Wood with Gold Leaf
5 ft 9 in high
Dashur
A Hittite vase was recovered from Inandik, Turkey showing a similar celebration of sacred marriage during a banquet (Sasson, ed. 1995 iv: 2522). One pair of full-clothed dancers on the vases are having intercourse with the man penetrating the woman from behind (*coitus a tergo*).

**Erotic Hunting**

**British Museum EA 37977**  
1550-1070 B.C.E.  
83 cm high; 98 cm wide  
Tomb of Nebamun, Thebes

Carvings and paintings of hunting with a throwing stick or boomerang can be metaphors for the sexual roles of woman and man. (Sasson, ed. 1995 iv: 2522). For example, eleven wall paintings in the British Museum from the tomb of Nebamun are among the most skillfully executed from ancient Egypt. Inscriptions on the paintings introduce Nebamun as a sanctuary scribe who records the offerings that households make to their divine patrons. The paintings show Nebamun and his household at work and play.

Here, Nebamun stands on a small boat with his wife, Hatshepsut, behind him and his son below. He is about to throw a stick into flock birds flushed from a papyrus thicket. The hieroglyphs below his raised arm describe Nebamun as "taking recreation and seeing what is good in the place of eternity" which may refer to having intercourse with Hatshepsut to conceive their son, not just going hunting with her.

**Erotic Geese and Ducks**

Carvings and paintings of ducks or geese can be metaphors for the sexual roles of woman and man. (Sasson, ed. 1995 iv: 2522).

**Egyptian Museum, Cairo**  
Geese from Tomb of Itat (2575-2465 B.C.E.)  
Tempera on Plaster  
5 ft 8 in wide  
Medum
Erotic Swimmers

Some two dozen spoons are carved with Nut, divine patron of the sky, as a nude girl swimming girl with Geb, divine patron of the earth, as a large waterfowl resting comfortably on top of her upturned arms (Kosloff and Bryan 1992: 347-348). Only two species of ducks have comparable markings: the bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*) in South Asia and the white faced tree duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*) in Ethiopia. [http://www.earthlife.net/birds/anseriformes.html](http://www.earthlife.net/birds/anseriformes.html)

Nut is a member of the ennead, Egypt’s community of the nine original divine patrons. She is the source of everything humans eat. Sometimes, Nut marries Re, the divine patron of the sun, to produce the crops of Egypt; sometimes she marries Geb, the divine patron of the earth.

Standard portraits of Nut show her as a woman with the *ankh*, the hieroglyph for life, and the *wadj*, a papyrus stalk characteristic of female members of the divine assembly. She carries a *nu* vase on her head, representing her womb where the seeds of all the crops of Egypt gestate.

Nut she is also depicted as a naked woman, her body studded with stars, arched like the heavens over Geb the earth. Here, Nut arches over Geb as usual, but has sun discs instead of on her womb. Nut swallows the sun in the evening and gives birth to it again in the morning. During the day the sun travels from her birth canal and goes to her mouth. On the ground, Geb is portrayed in an unusual somersault position. (Lamy 1981: 20-21)
Erotic Sleepers

Terracotta is an art medium which is shaped and dried, but not baked.

Erotic statues

Mother and Child
British Museum
4500 B.C.E.
Terracotta
Ur

Small terracotta statues of women from the Ubaid culture in southern Mesopotamia are strikingly slim in contrast to those from the north. A Mother and Child statue, for example, portrays a woman nursing her newborn. Necklaces and belts are painted around their necks and waists. The mother also has a painted bracelet on her wrist. Her shoulders and nipples are also painted. The infant’s head is elongated and the eyes are prominent.

Brititsh Museum
Halaf Godmother
5000 B.C.E.
Arpachiyah (Northern Iraq)

Clay statues of naked women appear have been recovered in Mesopotamia from the Neolithic period (10,000-4,000 B.C.E. to the Persian period (550-330 B.C.E.). These statues
have exaggerated female reproductive organs: Schematic stone figure, with virtually no arms or legs, and a small head, but exaggerated sexual organs.

Terracotta statues of the Godmother like one recovered from Chagar Bazar were made during the Halaf period. The women portrayed have large breast and hips to distinguish them as childbearers. The painted decorations on their bodies may represent tattoos, jewelry or clothing.

The Beersheba Culture (Beer Safad) produced exquisite ivory pieces in its subterranean workshops that protected people from the intense heat and sand storms in the valley. Archaeologists recovered a complete tusk in the ivory workshop as well as a stone table. Among the tools in the shop was a copper drill bit set into a bone handle. (Treasures of the Holy Land: ancient art from the Israel Museum, 1986: 57-86)
The style of the Beersheba ivories is unique. The Venus of Beersheba, for example, places her hands on her abdomen. Her small breasts and distended uterus are well defined. Her nipples and disproportionately large and deep navel were originally inlaid. Her pubic triangle is also disproportionately large and framed by three deep cuts. The twenty-eight shallow holes drilled into the triangle were filled with bitumen.

Chalcolithic worship is still a mystery, and the significance of the large number of statues recovered by archaeologists is still not decoded. Nonetheless, a tour burlesque in the Song of Solomon (Song 7:1-6) celebrates many of the same physical attributes of the female body.

How graceful are your feet in sandals, my royal lady!

Your rounded thighs are like jewels,  
   -- the work of a master hand.  
Your naval is a rounded bowl,  
   -- full of wine and water.  
Your belly is a heap of wheat,  
   -- circled with lilies.  
Your breasts are like two fawns,  
   -- twins of a gazelle.  

Your neck is like an ivory tower.  

Your eyes are pools in Heshbon,  
   -- at the Deep Water Gate.  
Your nose is like the Tower of Lebanon,  
   -- overlooking Damascus.  

Your head crowns you like Carmel,  

Your flowing locks are like purple;  
   -- a king is held captive in its braids.  

(Song 7:1-6)

The tour-burlesque is an erotic catalog for the parts of the human body, which it describes, one feature at a time. At each stop on the tour, one lover describes a part of the other’s anatomy using erotic analogies. Like the other genres in the Song of Solomon, the tour-burlesque appeals to one or more of the sense of the audience. There are at least nine tours-burlesque in the Song of Solomon (Song 1:5-6; 9:11; 3:6-11; 45:1-5, 10:11, 5:10-16; 6:4-7; 7:1-6, 7-10).

The Lover of the Royal Woman (Song 7:1-6) begins his tour burlesque at her feet, which he describes as the feet of dancers. She glides in her sandals as she walks. The image is visual.
Sandals
Denver Museum of Nature and Science
Leather
Egypt

The thighs of the Royal Woman are perfectly sculptured as if they had been crafted by a jeweler.

The lover sees the navel of the Royal Woman like the statue of the Venus of Beersheba as a drinking bowl full of wine.

In the world of the Bible, wine was drunk from a bowl, not from a stemmed glass. Drinking bowls (Ugaritic, Phoenician, Hebrew: kos) were made of pottery, bronze, silver, or gold. (Sasson, ed. 1995 i: 638) They were held with two hands allowing drinkers to enjoy both the deep, red color of the vine, and its bouquet. The image in the tour, therefore, appeals to both sight and smell, and may also reflect the way the lover of the Royal Woman cradled her belly in his hands, much the way the Venus of Beersheba cradles her abdomen with her own hands.

Michael C. Carlos Museum
Storage Jar with Dipper
Iron Age (720-580 BCE)
Ceramic

The strong wine was drawn out of a large storage jar with a dipper. (Sasson, ed. 1995 i: 638) Then it was poured into a tripod-based krater or a krater resting on a wooden stand and diluted with water. The Wise Woman invites her students to drink the wine she has mixed: “Come eat my bread, and rink the wine that I have mixed.” (Prov 9:5) Learning and love-making are both passionate experiences involving all the senses.

The lover describes the abdomen of the Royal Woman as a “heap of wheat”. She is pregnant, or will become pregnant. Her uterus is full, not flat. The wheat is an image of both the semen that her lover will plant in her womb, and the crops that will grow in the soil womb of Mother Earth.

In the world of the Bible, life is the ability to have a child and to have a harvest. Abraham and Sarah Negotiate with Yahweh for land and children (Gen 11:27—12:8).

“I will make you a great nation,
I will bless you.

I will make your name great,
I will make you a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you.
I will curse those who curse you.

All the earth shall find blessing you.”

*Gen 12:1-6*

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The Story of Ruth as a Persevering Widow (Ruth 3:1-18) also parallels a heap of grain with a distended uterus. Boaz accepts his responsibility as the legal guardian of the household of Elimelech by sending Ruth home with his grain. The grain, which is his return of the land to the household of Elimelech, will be matched soon by the semen, which will be his return of the children to the household. The association between the seed that will give birth to a child and the seed that will produce a harvest is further strengthened when Boaz pours barley into Ruth’s apron. She pulls the apron full of grain to her body, making her look like a woman who is heavily pregnant. (Benjamin 2003:172)

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Small statues of the female body portrayed naturally, but with their head rendered abstractly, were sculpted from terracotta and painted at Arpachiyah (Northern Iraq) and throughout the world of the Bible. Some have a small hole in the top so that the statue can be worn as a necklace. (Reade 1991:22)

The abstract heads are cone shaped, probably representing the crown identifying the woman as the Godmother, who at the beginning of the Bronze Age (3300 B.C.E.) was called “Isthar”.

Tammuz (Sumerian: Dumuzi) and Ishtar (Sumerian: Inanna) were lovers separated by death, but reunited by love. Tammuz descends into the land of the dead, and Ishtar faithfully pursues and rescues him. The stories tell not only of two lovers, but also of the death of the earth during the long dry season, and its rebirth at the beginning of the wet season during the celebration of the *akitu* New Year. Like the last drops of moisture which the parched soil sucked deep into the earth, Tammuz is drawn by stages into the land of the dead. Like the rain which moistens the soil at the end of the dry season so that farmers can plow and plant, the tears of
Ishtar in the land of the dead bring Tammuz back to life. She raises him from the dead like the first leaves of the crops that sprout through the soil under a farmer's care at the beginning of the growing season. (Matthews and Benjamin 1997: 305-311)

Erotic cylinder seals

Erotic plaques

Erotic plaques have been recovered only in Mesopotamia. Some are molded in clay (1894-1595 B.C.E.), others in lead (1363-1076 B.C.E.).

On the clay plaques a man and woman have intercourse in two different positions. In one the couple is standing and facing one another. The woman bends one leg at the knee. In the other the man performs rear entry intercourse while the woman bends over and drinks beer through a straw from a jar. The lovers on a terracotta plaque recovered in Babylon may represent the private lives of ordinary people or a sacred couple celebrating the ritual marriage of the ruler and the cultures divine patron. (Reade 1991: 82)

Again erotic art parallels the semen of the lover that produces a child, and the seed of the farmer that produces the beer. Land and children are the blessing which demonstrate that life exists.

From Ashur archaeologists recovered a painted plaster plaque showing Isthar as a woman whose body is covered with paint. The paint over her left eye is almost blindfolded by the paint. (Reade 1991:72)
Archaeology and the Near East
Archaeology did not emerge as a discrete discipline until the turn of the last century. The central notion from which archaeology developed is quite straightforward: humankind has left material traces of its history in and on the earth. The scholarly discipline of archaeology (from Greek words *archn* and *logos* meaning discourse about the past, or about origins) is one means of investigating that history. Whereas adventurers traveled to far-off places to seek novel experiences and exotica, archaeologists, on the other hand, surveyed and excavated at home and abroad in order to uncover the physical remains of history.

http://www.umich.edu/~kelseydb/Exhibits/DangerousArchaeology/PartOne.html

Earth Life
Discussion of the bar-headed goose (*anser indicus*) and the white faced tree duck (*dendrocygna viduata*).
http://www.earthlife.net/birds/anseriformes.html

Caroline Seawright, “Ancient Egyptian Sexuality”
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Late Bronze Culture and the Books of Joshua-Judges  
(1550-1200 B.C.E.)

The Iron I period (Iron IA: 1200-1000 B.C.E.) represented a recovery in Syria-Palestine from the chaos of the Late Bronze period (1550-1200 B.C.E.). At the beginning of the Late Bronze period Syria-Palestine belonged to Egypt’s sphere of influence. Egyptian troops stationed throughout the region maintained an order that allowed farmers and herders to tend their fields and flocks; that allowed merchants to move their goods safely along caravan routes; and, most important, that allowed governors to tax the produce of Syria-Palestine for Egypt. As political and social conditions in Egypt itself began to fall apart, however, law and order in Syria-Palestine vanished. Egyptian troops were recalled, and rogue bands of warriors (Egyptian: ‘apiru, shasu) raided and pillaged the land, making it almost impossible for farmers and herders and tax collectors to do anything.

Late Bronze period pharaohs like Amenophis II (1427-1401 B.C.E.) conducted military campaigns in Syria-Palestine. Amenophis waged his first campaign in 1420 B.C.E. and the second in 1418 B.C.E.. His annals list 3600 ‘apiru and 15,200 shasu among his prisoners of war. Amenhotep II reenacted his battles with his ‘apiru and shashu prisoners. Some were publicly hung on the bow of his royal barge, or the walls of temples. Others were beheaded.184

The Akkadian word: ‘apiru, habiru or hapiru cannot refer just to the biblical Hebrews (Hebrew: ibri), but the Hebrews are probably an example of the kind of people it describes.185 The ‘apiru appear in too many different regions of Syria-Palestine and during too many different time period for the word to have referred only to the Hebrews associated with the villages that appeared during the Iron I period in the hills north of Jerusalem.186

The word ‘apiru is not the proper name of a particular people, but a derogatory word that refers to a particular social class. Their common bond was social, not ethnic. The ‘apiru were herders and farmers who had abandoned their pastures and farms, and fled the settled areas of Syria-Palestine for remote locations. They were a people out of place, who supported their households by raiding herds, harvests and caravans. The Egyptians used the word to identify any peoples who lived in the deserts or wilderness areas of Syria-Palestine.
With the help of our Father who is the Sun of Egypt and the Moon of All Lands,
And Montu who cannot be defeated by any enemy,
And Baal the Brave, who does not leave a single survivor on the battlefield,
Sethos I extended the boundaries of Egypt to the horizons in every direction.

Not a single caravan could get past the bandits along the Coast Highway
Without being attacked from the hills by the godforsaken shasu,
Until His Majesty captured every last one of them.
Not a single shasu escaped.

The word: shasu is not Semitic. It is an Egyptian word meaning landless that Egyptians used to refer to a variety of nomadic or semi-nomadic people. There is no evidence, however, that the Egyptians referred to the Hebrews as shasu. The word also appears in the Annals of Sethos I (1294-1285 BCE) that were inscribed on either side of the north doorway into the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak temple in Thebes. The first three scenes describe Sethos’ march north along the Coast Highway in the Sinai.

His army clears the area of shasu who were raiding caravans along the Coast Highway from the Delta into the Philistine Plain. ¹⁸⁷

The material remains recovered by archaeologists from Late Bronze period sites create an epitaph for the once-great Bronze Age culture. The trade empires of Mycenae, Hatti and Egypt collapsed setting into motion massive population movements, military disasters, the general demise of the city-state system, and the destabilization of Egypt's empire in Syria-Palestine. Cities were destroyed and not rebuilt. Potters returned to hand-shaping thick vessels from clays that were full of impurities, that cracked when fired and that were poorly mended. As the great world order created by Egypt, Hatti and Mycenae died, the people that these empires had ruled for so long were plunged into a life or death struggle with an unkind land in a dangerous world.

During the Iron I period long-time peoples of Syria-Palestine tried new ways of living, and new peoples immigrating into Syria-Palestine renewed the vitality of this dying land. A major element in this transition to Iron I period cultures from Bronze Age cultures was the establishment of hundreds of small villages, renewing a landscape that had been sparsely inhabited in the Late Bronze period.

Adaptation, rather than widespread conformity, was the signature of the cultures of the Iron I period. Cultures with distinct social, economic and political institutions appeared. Bronze Age culture in Syria-Palestine was homogenous. Iron I period cultures, in contrast, were
diverse. The peoples of each region of Syria-Palestine developed unique ways to adapt to their life in different lands. There was no international political or economic system dominating Syria-Palestine. The business of feeding and protecting the people and of caring for the land and children was local.

During the Iron II period (1000-586 B.C.E.) the diverse cultures of the Iron I period would become the states of Ammon, Moab, Edom east of the Jordan River; Israel and Judah west of the Jordan River; and Philistia, Tyre and Sidon along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The social world of each was customized to fit its unique geography and population.¹⁸⁸

The models of state formation that were developing in Ammon, Moab, Edom, Israel and Judah were innovative. Their institutions had not previously appeared in Syria-Palestine. State formation in Philistia, Tyre and Sidon, however, was conservative following models developed during the Bronze Age.

Although life shifted from the macro economics of the Egyptian empire to the micro economics of Gilead or of the Jezreeel Valley or of the Shephelah Foothills, there is a clear continuity between the culture of the Late Bronze period and Iron I period. The only clearly identified outsiders were the Sea Peoples who settled the Philistine Plain along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to the south, and the Sharon Plain along the coast to the north.

Two common social institutions shared by all micro cultures in Syria-Palestine were the village and state culture. Both appear in the Bible.¹⁸⁹ The social world of early Israel was a village culture that developed during the Iron I period. The monarchy was a city culture or state that developed during the Iron II period (1000-586 B.C.E.). Villages are a social institution in a decentralized and subsistence culture. States are a social institution in a centralized and surplus culture.
The first Hebrew villages appeared in the hills of Judah, west of the Jordan River and north of Jerusalem. Their initial growth took place around 1200 B.C.E. No dates for the ancient world are absolutely accurate, but three prominent wars help calendar the appearance of these Hebrew villages: the Battle of Kadesh (1286 B.C.E.), the wars of Merneptah (1224-1214 B.C.E.), and the Battle with the Sea Peoples (1190 B.C.E.).

The Battle of Kadesh took place around 1286 BCE. Pharaoh Ramses II of Egypt and Hattusilis III, the Great King of the Hittites, battled on the Orontes River in today's Syria. For more than one hundred years, Egypt and Hatti had wrestled for political and economic control of Syria-Palestine. The conflict drained the resources of both states. Following this famous, but inconclusive, battle at Kadesh a treaty was signed.

A genizah, Hebrew for "hiding place," is a depository for scrolls containing the divine name that are no longer usable. These shemot or "names," are put in a genizah. Usually found in the attic or basement of a synagogue, but a genizah can also be a hole in a wall or a pit in the ground. The famous Cairo Genizah is located in the Ezra Synagogue built in 1882.

Both Egyptian and Hittite versions of the treaty have been recovered. Ramses II had the treaty carved in hieroglyphics on the walls of no less than five temples. One was on the walls of the Temple of Amon in Karnak and another on the walls of the Ramesseum, his funeral chapel in the Valley of the Pharaohs. Both are located near today's Luxor in central Egypt. The Hittite version is written on clay tablets in Akkadian cuneiform, which was the diplomatic language of the ancient Near East. Archaeologists recovered these tablets from the archives of Hattusas, the Hittite capital.

The Treaty of Ramses II and Hattusilis III was a remarkable political and military accomplishment. It was motivated both by the need of both Egypt and Hatti for economic recovery and by the increasing military threat of the Sea Peoples migrating into the eastern Mediterranean. The treaty ended the war and liberated the people of Syria-Palestine from both Egyptian and Hittite domination. Peace ensued for virtually the next fifty years.
The withdrawal of the Egyptians and the Hittites from Syria-Palestine was not an unqualified blessing for its indigenous peoples. Population dropped dramatically. Cities and villages were destroyed, trade caravans vanished and sixty percent of the people of Syria-Palestine died from starvation due to crop failures. Famine led inevitably to the outbreak of wars and endemic diseases aggravated by shifting populations. These disasters were not isolated and sporadic, but ongoing. Some villagers in Syria-Palestine took advantage of their freedom and tried to insure their households against an uncertain future by migrating into the hills where they reestablished abandoned villages or founded new ones of their own. Among these refugees were the Hebrews, the ancestors of biblical Israel.

Merneptah (1224-1214 BCE) celebrated his wars on a stele originally inscribed by Amenhotep III (1398-1361 B.C.E.). In 1896, excavators recovered this granite column, which is more than seven feet high and three feet wide, from Merenptah's funeral chapel in the Valley of the Pharaohs. It is now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The stele contains the only mention of Israel yet discovered from the Egypt of this period. As a result, it has been used to argue that the Israel which Merneptah encounters in Syria-Palestine before 1200 B.C.E. was founded by the Hebrews who must have fled Egypt before 1250 B.C.E.

The Battle with the Sea Peoples (1190 B.C.E.) is celebrated on the outside walls of Medinet Habu, which is the funeral chapel of Ramesses III (1194-1163 B.C.E.) in the Valley of the Pharaohs. Following their invasion of Egypt, some of the Sea Peoples settled along the coast of Syria-Palestine to become the Philistines of the Bible. The arrival of the Sea Peoples was a major influence in the centralization of the Hebrew villages by David to form a state after 1000 BCE.

After the death of Moses, the Servant of Yahweh, Yahweh spoke to Joshua son of Nun, who had helped Moses. “My servant Moses is dead. Now cross the Jordan River with the people into the land… You will walk the land I promised to Moses. The land of the Hittites will be your land -- east to the Mediterranean Sea, south to the Sinai Desert, north to the Lebanon Mountains and the Euphrates River. No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. I was with Moses. I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them…

Inauguration of Joshua
(Josh 1:1-9)

Therefore, based on archaeological dates for the Battle of Kadesh (1286 BCE), the wars of Merneptah (1224-1214 BCE), and the Battle with the Sea Peoples (1190 B.C.E.), the appearance of the Hebrews in Syria Palestine is now dated to 1200 BCE, after the end of the Late Bronze period and before peoples like the Philistines and the
Hebrews began to affect seriously the foreign policies of Egypt in Syria-Palestine.

**Stele of Merneptah**  
*Egyptian Museum*  
1224-1214 B.C.E.  
*Granite*  
7ft h x 3 ft w  
*Merneptah’s Chapel, Valley of Pharaohs*  

The biblical Hebrews were a micro culture that appeared in Syria-Palestine during the Iron I period. They settled hundreds of new villages in the hills along the west side of the Jordan River north of Jerusalem. It is still unclear where these villagers came from. Curiously their own traditions in Bible describe themselves as warriors who invaded Syria-Palestine from the west.

*Albrecht Alt (1883–1956)*  
*University of Leipzig*

Archaeological evidence in contrast has led to at least three different reconstructions of the *conquest of Canaan* by the Hebrews. Albrecht Alt (1883–1956) and Martin Noth proposed that the Hebrews peacefully emigrated west from Jordan River into unsettled areas of Syria-Palestine. There were few battles. Violence between these Hebrews and other peoples occurred only when the original Hebrew villages begin to expand.

George Mendenhall and Norman Gottwald both described *the conquest of Canaan* by the Hebrews as a social revolution. Once Egypt’s military support for the rulers of the states in Syria-Palestine was withdrawn, villagers stopped farming and herding for them. They revolted against the surplus state culture that had enslaved them during the Bronze Age. After they destroyed the cities along the coast that governed their villages, they moved east toward the Jordan River and established a *retribalized* or decentralized subsistence culture.

*Martin Noth (1902–1960)*  
*University of Bonn*

Throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages herders migrated into the regions of the Jordan River from the Sinai Desert and elsewhere. It seems unlikely, however, that all these villages in the hills of Judah were founded by Hebrews who launched a military invasion of Syria-Palestine from the east as the Sea Peoples had done from the west.

Likewise, these Hebrews are not new arrivals migrating from the east into previously unsettled areas of Syria-Palestine.
Finally, the Hebrews did not launch a *peasant revolt* that conquered the coastal cities and destroyed them.

*George Mendenhall (1916-)*

*University of Michigan*

At least twice during the Iron I period tensions led to war destroying many cities and villages in Syria-Palestine. There are, however, no archaeological connections between these periods of violence and the Hebrew villagers. The Bible is the only evidence for an invasion of Syria-Palestine from the east during the Iron I period. The material remains in of the Hebrew villages are neither foreign nor military. Nothing in the ruins of these villages points to the Hebrews as warriors who invaded Syria-Palestine or as revolutionaries who overthrew it. The economy of these villagers was agricultural, not military. They left almost no weapons. They built few walled towns or monumental buildings. Giloh, south of Jerusalem, is a major exception. The Hebrews came from inside, not outside, Syria-Palestine. Their writing, language, material culture, and even their religious traditions link them to cultures found throughout Syria-Palestine.

*Norman Gottwald*

*Pacific School of Religion*

Archaeology suggests that the Hebrews who founded the villages in the hills west of the Jordan River Valley were farmers and herders from cities along the coast, not nomads from the desert. Given the disintegration in the previously heavily populated areas of the coastal plain and the foothills, however, these villages were certainly not founded by the cities of the plain. These farmers and herders did not wage war, they survived war. What they had in common was that they were social survivors who fled the famine, plague, and war which brought the Bronze Age to an end. They were segments of the population who for environmental or economic reasons removed themselves from the cities of Syria-Palestine and settled into a politically less complex culture in the hills. They left a centralized, surplus state culture and created a decentralized, subsistence village culture. There was no stigma to be attached to their decision. It was simply a sign of the adaptability and flexibility inherent within the world of the Bible during the Iron I period.

Hebrew villages were politically quite simple and egalitarian. Archaeologists have identified more than three hundred village sites in the hills which date from the Iron I period.
Ninety percent were new foundations. For example, in one sample of 136 villages, 97 did not exist before 1200 BCE.

Similar villages appear east of the Jordan, which the Bible calls the “Gilead”. The villages were small and scattered. Most were only one-acre parcels of land. There were some 50-300 inhabitants per village. For example, Ai was a modest 2.75-acre village founded about 1220 BCE on the site of a 27.5 acre city destroyed at the end of the Early Bronze period (3000-2000 BCE). The nearest village was Khirbet Raddana, four miles west.

The archaeological record shows the Hebrews were remarkably successful at maximizing their labor and spreading their risks. The number of villages without walls and other defenses increased rapidly. Between 1000 and 800 BCE their population expanded to 80,000, and more than 100 new villages were founded in the hills of Samaria, Galilee to the north, and the Beersheba basin to the south. Every household shared in the labor intensive work of terracing, planting, and processing the grain and fruit. More and more agriculturally marginal land was turned into productive farms and vineyards. What was not consumed was stored in huge buildings like those at Raddana, Shiloh, and Tel Masos as a check against famine.

Early Hebrew villages farmed a combination of wheat and barley, depending on the quality of the soil, temperature, and rainfall. They tended fig and olive trees and skillfully managed grape vines on terraced hillside plots. They cleared new areas of maquis brush and cultivated the land, using wooden or iron blades.

Maquis Brush

*Maquis* brush is a stand of various evergreen shrubs and trees from three to nine feet tall. These stands include the Carob (Latin: *Ceratonia siliqua*), Pistacio (Latin: *Pistacia lentiscus*), the Buckthorn (Latin: *Rhamnus alaternus*), the Hawthorn (Latin: *Crataegus*), the Bay Laural (Latin: *Laurus nobilis*), the Myrtle (Latin: *Myrtus communis*), the Broom (Latin: *Spartium junceum*) and the Sandarac (Latin: *Teraclinis articulata*).

A significant influence on the social structure of early Israel was where its pioneers chose to live. They fled from the coast with its trade routes, commercial centers, and farms, where no one was safe, and they founded new villages in the hills just north of Jerusalem. Here the land was safe, but it was barren and rugged and demanding, all of which would affect the society which developed there and the roles which men and women would play in it. Here in the hills there would be no surplus to fuel the economy.
The surplus economies of the Bronze Age were built by monarchs, taxes, soldiers, cities and slaves. Monarchs provided a centralized government for the great cities. Soldiers controlled its population and expanded its borders. Slaves produced goods for trade. It was an efficient, but brutal, system. Taxation, slavery and war painfully affected the lives of all but a minority of the people who lived in these states. When great wars of commerce and conquest brought down the international trade empires of Mycenae, Hatti, and Egypt about 1200 BCE, survivors in Syria-Palestine had neither the resources, nor the desire, to rebuild the social system which had enslaved them. Therefore, the economy of early Israel was not a surplus or slave economy, but a subsistence economy. There would be no monarchs, no soldiers, no slaves, no taxes, no cities and no standing army. It was a demanding and idealistic society. Nonetheless, it lasted almost 200 years.

Archaeology’s reconstruction of the role of the ‘apiru in the social world of Syria-Palestine, and the social conditions that led to the founding of the Hebrew villages in the hills of Judah enrich the understanding of two intriguing stories: A Story of Rahab as Host (Josh 1:1-24) and Jephthah Delivers Israel from Ammon (Judg 11:1-40).

Story of Rahab as Host (Josh 2:1-24)

A Story of Rahab as Host (Josh 2:1–24) begins when Joshua dispatches two warriors from Shittim on a reconnaissance mission. The destination of the warriors is not Jericho, but simply the land (Josh 2:24). They go directly to the house of Rahab. She greets the strangers with hospitality, in contrast to the ruler of the land, who threatens them with violence. The ruler sends soldiers to question Rahab about collaborating with Joshua’s warriors. The story ends when she rescues the warriors with cleverness and courage.

The time when the story takes place is the Iron I period. The ruler of the land and his soldiers struggle to prevent ‘apiru like Rahab, Joshua and his warriors from destroying the tributary economics that dominated Syria-Palestine until the end of the Late Bronze period.

Pharaohs waged military campaigns in Syria-Palestine to harvest raw materials like the flax produced by the household of Rahab that would flow along trade routes into the economy of Egypt proper. Egypt stationed governors in Syria-Palestine and provided them with detachments of Egyptian soldiers. These governors leased the land to local rulers who used their own soldiers to onfronts Rahab, like the soldiers who interrogate Rahab, in Syria-Palestine to
represent its interests. These governors leased the land to rulers, like the monarch in the story, to harvest raw materials like flax and to produce manufactured goods like rope for Egypt. Surrounding trade centers, like the city in the story, were villages of farmers and herders, like the household of Rahab. Governors set quotas of goods and services for each village. Representatives of these villages, like Rahab, lived in cities to protect their goods in transit.

The political reforms of Pharaoh Akhenaten (1364–1347 B.C.E.) plunged Egypt into economic turmoil. Egypt recalled its governors and soldiers from Syria-Palestine. Those Egyptian officials who remained were powerless to harvest and process raw materials. Households began to abandon their villages and pioneer new ones in the hills above the Jordan River. Some, like Joshua and his warriors, became raiders who attacked caravans moving to and from trade centers. Officials filled diplomatic pouches to Akhenaten’s government at Amarna with urgent appeals for help. These letters describe conditions similar to those in the books of Joshua and Judges (Fig. 29).

References to flax and rope in the story may suggest that the household of Rahab made rope from flax for Egypt. Wild flax is a delicate plant with beautiful blue flowers and is native to Syria-Palestine. As early as 5000 B.C.E., farmers began domesticking the first of some two hundred species eventually used throughout the world of the Bible for linseed oil, fodder, cloth, and rope. The Gezer Almanac (see Fig. 2) assigns a month for harvesting flax. Farmers pulled the stalks when the seeds were ripe and dried them. Refiners pressed the seeds to extract linseed oil. The dregs became animal fodder. After soaking the stalks to ret, or loosen, the outer fibers, they spread them on rooftops to dry. Weavers hacked, or combed, the fibers from the inner core and spun them into thread. The short, tangled fibers left over from the combing were tow (Judg 16:9), which made a coarse yarn. Flax and wool were the standard fibers used to weave clothing until the development of cotton.

Rahab is a nickname that praises Yahweh for enlarging a household (1 Chr 23:17; 24:21). Nevertheless, the opening episode introduces Rahab as a prostitute. Joshua’s warriors may have gone to her house to have sex, but the relationship between the warriors and the woman may be much more sophisticated. The story contrasts Rahab’s shameful title and honorable actions with the honorable title and shameful actions of Joshua. It uses a label like prostitute for Rahab in its crisis in order to refute it in the denouement. With the exception of this label of shame, the story treats Rahab with honor throughout. Even though Rahab subverts the male establishments of both Joshua and the ruler of the land, her behavior is neither prohibited nor scandalous, like the behavior of Ruth (Ruth 3:1–18), of Tamar (Gen 38:1–30), or of Bathsheba (1 Kgs 1:5–53). The story contains no demurs insisting that Rahab is not a suitable candidate for her mission. In the books of Samuel-Kings, Jesse apologizes: “here remains yet the youngest, but behold he is keeping the sheep” (1 Sam 16:11). In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet demurs: “Yahweh, our Creator, I do not know how to speak” (Jer 1:6). Not one character in this Story of Rahab, however, apologizes that she is only a prostitute.

Later biblical and rabbinical traditions also treat Rahab with honor. The books of Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles (1 Chr 2:10) honor Rahab as the mother of Boaz. Respect for Rahab continues in the earliest translations and commentaries. Early Jewish translations of the Bible into the Aramaic language, which are called “Targumim,” translate the Hebrew word for
“prostitute” into Aramaic as “innkeeper.” Rabbis like Rashi argue that Rahab is a “grocer.” The Letter to the Hebrews honors her as a woman of faith (Heb. 11:31). The rabbis celebrate Rahab as one of the four most beautiful women in the world. The Talmud has Joshua marry Rahab, so that, ironically, he masters Syria-Palestine only to be mastered by Syria-Palestine’s most engaging woman. At least eight of their descendants were prophets of the stature of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Huldah (b. Meg. 15a).

The time when the Story of Rahab as Host was told may offer one explanation for the contrast between her title and her actions. Like many of these traditions about Joshua, who lived at the end of the Late Bronze period, this story developed during the reign of Josiah. Josiah called all the people of Judah to the temple to renew the covenant (2 Kgs 23:21–23; 2 Chr 35:1–19); consequently, the book of Joshua portrays Joshua calling the Hebrews to the sanctuary at Shechem to renew their covenant with Yahweh (Josh 24:1–28). The household of Rahab considered the temple in Jerusalem as little more than a royal chapel, so may have continued to worship Yahweh at the Gilgal sanctuary of Jericho. Josiah and the household of David could go up to the temple to tell the stories of the great works that Yahweh did in Jerusalem, but the household of Rahab would go to Gilgal to tell the stories of the great works that Yahweh did at Jericho. Consequently, Josiah’s prophets labeled Rahab a prostitute, not because of the work she did in the Late Bronze period, but because of the political position that her household took in the Iron Age (2 Kgs 9:22; Isa 23:16–17; Nah 3:4). She is a prostitute because her household was in political exile in the days of Josiah. A similar use of the terms appears in a Trial of Samaria in the book of Micah (Mic 1:2–7), which does not indict Samaria for failing to prosecute women and men who engage in sexual intercourse for a living. The trial indicts the state for negotiating covenants for trade and military assistance that provided luxury for a few and poverty for many. Micah parodies the titles of the women, whose marriages ratified these state covenants, by labeling them “prostitutes,” and the goods and services that Samaria enjoyed from the covenants as “the wages of prostitutes.” Therefore, it was not the household of Joshua in early Israel that labeled Rahab a prostitute, but the household of Josiah during the final days of the monarchy in Judah.

In contrast to the other traditions in the book of Joshua, Rahab, and not Joshua and his warriors, is the protagonist in the story. Even more unusual, in contrast to Rahab who is wise, the story casts Joshua and his warriors as fools. The tradition celebrates Rahab as more faithful to Yahweh than Joshua and his warriors, and as a better warrior. She also outwits the ruler of the land and his soldiers.

Joshua has seen all the powerful events that Yahweh has brought about at the Red Sea and east of the Jordan Valley. Rahab has only heard about these great works. Yet Joshua is doubting, while Rahab is believing. Joshua sees, and does not believe. Rahab only hears, but believes. When Yahweh commissions Joshua to take the land, the appropriate response is for him to go and take the land. Instead Joshua sends out a reconnaissance mission. Today military science requires reconnaissance, but herem war in the world of the Bible forbids it. Reconnaissance missions determine the strength of the enemy, which in herem war is irrelevant. Warriors are expected to go into herem war at a disadvantage in order to highlight the victory as divine rather than human. To prepare for herem war, a chief like Joshua may use prophets (1 Kgs 22:5), divination (2 Kgs 13:15), necromancy (1 Sam 28:6), and the ephod with its urim and thummim.
(1 Sam 30:7–8; 1 Sam 28:6), but not reconnaissance. Reconnaissance characterizes warriors as petty (Num 13:1–14:15), cowardly (Deut 1:19–46), greedy (Judg 1:22–26), and heretical (Judg 18:1–31). Going into battle against a superior opponent is an act of faith that highlights the victory as Yahweh’s, not Israel’s. Jerubbaal (Gideon) twice reduces the size of the tribe mustered to defend Israel against the Midianites (Judg 7:1–8:28). Likewise, Deuteronomy (Deut 13:13–19) assumes that the size of a city convicted of treason is of no consequence to the punitive expedition ordered against it.

Rahab has all of the military skills that Joshua lacks. Joshua personally selects the messengers to gather intelligence for him, yet they are so incompetent that the soldiers of the land detect them immediately. Rahab is a master of combat tactics. She is an expert in designing safe houses. She knows how to use camouflage and to distribute misinformation. She knows all the commando tactics necessary to scale down the walls of a city, and just how to avoid the soldiers who patrol the border along the Jordan River.

Rahab is also more faithful to Yahweh than Joshua is. She has no doubts that Yahweh will conquer the land. Therefore, she asks his warriors to spare her household when Yahweh sweeps through the city as Yahweh swept through Egypt slaying their firstborn (Exod 12:23). Like the Hebrews who celebrated their first Passover from slavery in Egypt by marking their doors with lamb’s blood, Rahab celebrates the Passover of her household by marking her window with a blood-red rope (Josh 2:18; 6:25). Finally, Rahab is more powerful than the ruler of the land, who considers her both ambitious and capable of overthrowing him. He had her under surveillance. His soldiers also respect Rahab, and obey her orders to search for the messengers outside the walls.

The crisis episode (Josh 2:1) condenses the actions that appear in most hospitality stories (Gen 18:1–15; 19:1–22; Judg 19:1–30; 2 Sam 17:15–22). The commission that Joshua gives to the messengers now almost completely eclipses Rahab’s actions. Since Joshua is not the protagonist, it would be better to read the commission simply as a clause that modifies the strangers to whom Rahab offers hospitality: “two warriors, whom Joshua ben Nun dispatched from a sacred grove of eucalyptus trees with the orders: ‘Go and scout the land,’ approached the gates of the land at sundown disguised as messengers. Rahab the prostitute saw them coming, and went to meet them. She bowed to the ground and said, ‘Please, gentlemen, come to my house. Wash your feet and spend the night. Then you may rise early and go on your way’” (Josh 2:1).

The climax (Josh 2:2–7) reports the shrewdness with which Rahab defends the warriors. The Bible regularly celebrates the shrewdness with which Israel’s ancestors outwit foreign rulers. Abraham shrewdly outwits Pharaoh (Gen 12:9–13:1) and the ruler of Gerar (Gen 20:1–18). Isaac outwits a Philistine ruler (Gen 26:1–11). This story casts Rahab as being as shrewd as Abraham or Isaac.

There are two episodes in the denouement (Josh 2:8–24). One recounts the Covenant between Yahweh and Rahab (Josh 2:8–14), the other her celebration of Passover (Josh 2:15–24). The first episode reports Rahab’s profession of faith (Deut 25:5–9). She ratifies two basic articles of Israel’s creed: it is Yahweh who gives Israel land (Josh 2:8–9) and it is Yahweh who sets
Israel free (Josh 2:10). Her vocabulary is almost all taken from Deuteronomy, which was the basis of Josiah’s reform (Deut 6:21–23; 26:5–10). She also promises to help Joshua capture the land (Josh 2:12–13). Joshua’s warriors react by granting Rahab and her household amnesty (Josh 2:14).

In the second episode of the denouement Rahab exercises her obligations as a covenant partner of Yahweh by helping Joshua’s warriors escape (Josh 2:15–16). They reaffirm their promise of amnesty for her household (Josh 2:17–24). This episode uses prolepsis, which arranges events according to importance, not chronology. Rahab lets the warriors down by a rope (Josh 2:15) before negotiating a covenant with them (Josh 2:16–18). Chronologically, she would have negotiated with Joshua’s warriors before lowering them over the city wall.

The point of the story is to remind its audience that Rahab is not a renegade; she is the mother of a household. The household of Rahab snapped up Josiah’s label of “prostitute” and used this story to refute it (2 Kgs 23:7). How can an ancestor like Sarah (Gen 12:9–13:1), Tamar (Gen 38:1–30), Shiprah and Puah (Exod 1:12–21), the daughter of Levi (Exod 2:1–10), and Miriam (Exod 15:20–21) be a prostitute? How can a chief like Deborah (Judg 4:1–5:31), who delivers her household from its enemies, be a prostitute?

The story warns the household of Josiah to remember that the hospitality that earned the household of Rahab honor in early Israel should not be taken away by someone whose own ancestors were its beneficiaries. The household of Rahab retains the label in introducing its ancestor Rahab, to question how a household that did not betray Joshua could betray Josiah. Without the hospitality, the military skill, and the unconditional faith of Rahab, the warriors of Joshua would have died in the gates of the land. The household of Rahab, in fact, is not a prostitute, but a covenant partner. Her household is hospitable, not hostile, to both Joshua and Josiah. To protect the warriors of Joshua, Rahab defies the orders of the ruler of the land, tricks his soldiers, and then uses one of her household’s own flax ropes to help the warriors escape.

The Story of Rahab as Host was told to defend her household against a new Joshua, named “Josiah,” who tried to excommunicate it for continuing to worship Yahweh outside Jerusalem. The cruel irony that the household of Rahab had welcomed as strangers those whose descendants were trying to exterminate it may have led the household to question the value of hospitality as a means of survival. The story reminded the household that the same Yahweh who delivered it once from Joshua, will would deliver it again from Josiah. By contrasting Rahab’s gracious hospitality, outstanding military skill, and profound faith in Yahweh with Joshua’s questioning faith and bungling strategy, the storytellers certified that her household should not be exterminated, but continue to enjoy all the rights and privileges of a covenant partner in early Israel.

The Story of Rahab as Host introduces the books of Joshua and Judges to emphasize that the Hebrews conquer the land by accepting hospitality from Rahab. She hears what Yahweh has done for the Hebrews, and negotiates a covenant of her own with Yahweh for land and children. The Hebrews join the inhabitants of the land in overthrowing the monarchs who oppress them. The story creates a stark contrast between the violence of a Joshua and the other chiefs, who exterminate strangers, and the hospitality of a Rahab and her household, who welcome them.
The land belongs, not to the powerful like Joshua and his warriors who conquer its inhabitants, but to the powerless like Rahab and her household who welcome strangers with hospitality.

**Jephthah Delivers Israel from Ammon (Judg 11:1-40)**

In *Jephthah Delivers Israel from Ammon* (Judg 11:1-40) a father offers his daughter as a human sacrifice in thanksgiving to Yahweh for delivering his household from its enemies (Fig. 34). Today Jephthah’s actions would be child abuse and murder.

Like Jacob, Jephthah becomes the father of his household, not by birth, but by achievement. His birth mother is not the mother of the household, but a secondary wife, although her title is generally translated into English as “harlot,” “concubine,” or “prostitute.” Jephthah’s father did not designate Jephthah to be his heir, but chose a son from the mother of the household. The heir and his brothers exile Jephthah to protect their status in the household, just as the sons of Jacob exile Joseph. Gilead exercises his authority to appoint an heir, and his heir exercises his authority as the new father of the household to adopt and to exile members by forcing Jephthah to become a man without a household. The same belligerence that made Jephthah a threat to this new father of the household, however, becomes an asset to other exiles who join Jephthah and support their households by raiding caravans.

When the people of Ammon invade the land of Gilead, however, the same sons who drove Jephthah into exile send him a call to arms and designate him as the chief who will deliver them from their enemies. He reminds them: “Did you not shame me, and excommunicate me from the household of my father?” (Judg 11:7). Then he negotiates with them for his reinstatement. He will serve as their chief on condition that, if he defeats the Ammonites, they will designate him as the father of their of household. The covenant they negotiate with Jephthah is comparable to the covenant made between the divine assembly and Marduk in the Enuma Elish Stories. Marduk demands: “If I agree to serve as your deliverer, if I am successful in defeating Tiamat, if I save your lives, you must proclaim me the ruler of the divine assembly. My word, not yours, must determine all things. What I create must not change; what I command must not be revoked or altered” (Enuma IV:3–41).

As a chief, Jephthah vows not only a portion of the plunder that his warriors will take from the Ammonites, but also “whoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites” (Judg 11:30–31). His vow is part of the ritual of *herem* war. Like David, who shared his plunder with those who remained with the pack animals, Jephthah shares the price of war with those who remained in the village (1 Sam 30:21–25).

The first person to greet Jephthah after the battle is his daughter. She comes out of the village playing a tambourine and dancing (Exod 15:20; 1 Sam 18:6). She is Jephthah’s “only child” (Judg 11:34). This is the child that Jephthah designated to be his heir.

When Jephthah realizes the implications of his vow, he has second thoughts, but his daughter is resolute. She knows that the honor of the household must be maintained. She insists that her father fulfill his vow. The daughter of Jephthah, like the daughters of Lot, is not a tragic or
pathetic figure. She is heroic. Unlike the daughters of Lot, she is not silent. Her words reinforce her actions, and she makes the decision to lay down her life for her household.

Every year, Hebrew women remember the daughter of Jephthah. They lament not only her premature death, but also her inability to fulfill her role as a mother.

At the beginning of the story, Jephthah has a child, but no land. At the end of the story, he has land, but no child. He regains his position within the household of Gilead, but he is unable to pass on his inheritance. The story remembers Jephthah as a father who paid a terrible price for trying to defend his village, and to provide an heir for his household on his own. Like all hero stories, Jephthah Delivers Israel from Ammon reminds the Hebrews that only Yahweh can bless a household with land and children. Without Yahweh, fathers of households are powerless.

There was a chief from the household of Gilead named “Jephthah,” who was the son of Gilead and a secondary wife. Besides Jephthah, Gilead had sons with his primary wife. When the sons of Gilead with his primary wife became elders, they excommunicated Jephthah. “Because you are the son of stranger, you shall inherit nothing.”

Jephthah went into exile in the land of Tob, about twelve miles north of Ramoth-gilead near the border of Jordan and Syria today. Other exiles joined him and they supported their households by raiding.

Some time later, when Ammon began to attack Israel, the elders of Gilead sent messengers to Jephthah in the land of Tob. “Come,” they said to Jephthah, “be our chief that we may defend ourselves against Ammon.”

“Are you not the elders who excommunicated me from the household of my father?” Jephthah replied. “Why do you come to me now, when you are in distress?”

The elders of Gilead replied to Jephthah, “In spite of our actions then, we are now asking you to return as the chief of Gilead and defend us against Ammon.”

Jephthah told the messengers to reply to the elders of Gilead: “If you allow me to return and Yahweh delivers Ammon up to me, then you must recognize me as the father of the household of Gilead.”

The elders of Gilead replied: “We will do as you say. Yahweh is our witness.”

So Jephthah returned to Gilead with the messengers, and the warriors of Gilead inaugurated him as their chief before Yahweh at the sanctuary of Mizpah.

Then Jephthah sent messengers to the ruler of Ammon with the message: “What have you against me that you attack me in my land?” (Judg 11:12).

The spirit of Yahweh came upon Jephthah (Judg. 11:29). He reconquered Gilead and Manasseh, and Mizpah-Gilead as well, and from there he went on to attack Rabbath-Ammon.

Before the battle, Jephthah made a vow to Yahweh: “If you deliver Ammon up to me, I will sacrifice to you the first to come out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in triumph.”
Then Jephthah attacked Rabbath-Ammon and Yahweh delivered Ammon up to him. His victory was complete. He destroyed twenty villages between Aroer and Minnith and Abel-keramim, and sold the Ammonites as slaves in Israel.

When Jephthah returned to Mizpah, his daughter was the first person to come out of his house, praising Yahweh with her tambourines and dancing. She was his heir. Jephthah had no other sons or daughters. When Jephthah saw her, he tore his clothes in mourning, and cried out: “Oh my daughter, the words of your song are a death sentence for our household. For I have made a vow to Yahweh and I must fulfill it.”

“Father,” she replied, “you have made a vow to Yahweh. Do with me as you have vowed, because Yahweh has delivered your enemies up to you. But grant me this favor. For two months, let me and the other marriageable women in the household go off to the mountains to mourn our infertility.”

“Go,” he replied, and sent her away for two months.

She departed with the other marriageable women and they mourned their infertility on the mountains. After two months she returned to her father without ever having had sexual intercourse, and her father sacrificed her to Yahweh as he had vowed. It then became an annual custom for the women of Israel to mourn the daughter of Jephthah from Gilead for four days.
Iron I Culture in Stories of Thebez and Jael  
(1200-1000 B.C.E.)

During the formative of early Israel women played a significant role in both the day to day work of having children and of having harvests. Among their many other contributions to the livelihood of their households women pitched the tents where their households slept, and baked the bread that their households ate.

Cereals are still more widely used as food in Africa today, than anywhere in developed world. They make up more than seventy-five percent of the calories in the average diet. Most of these cereals are naturally fermented.

Fermentation is one of the oldest methods for preparing and preserving foods. Different methods of fermentation are used to make alcoholic beverages, lactic acid, leavened breads and protein substitutes.192

The Egyptians had fifteen different words for bread.193 Egypt’s poor ate bread and drank beer. Egypt’s rich drank beer and wine, and ate pigeon, duck, oxen and some forty kinds of bread and pastry. Egypt’s dead prayed that the living members of their households would bring bread and beer to their tombs. Models placed in tombs illustrate how Egyptians ground the grain, kneaded the dough and strain the mash for beer and bread.

Baking bread and brewing beer used substantially the same ingredients and, to the point of fermentation, the same procedure. Grain was the main ingredient of both.194 The most common type of beer was brewed by straining the mash from fermented bread into a vat. The people of Sudan still brew bouza from fermented bread.195 Dates were used to feed the yeast sugar.

Bouza beer, a fermented alcoholic beverage produced from wheat in Egypt, has been brewed by Egyptians since the days of the Pharaohs.196 It is a thick, pasty yellow brew with an agreeable taste and produces a sensation of heat when consumed. It is prepared by coarsely

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Hymn to Ninkasi  
(Matthews and Benjamin 3rd edition)

You, Ninkasi, were born at the source of the rivers, 
   You were nursed by Ninhursag . . .
She laid the foundations of your great city on the sacred lake, 
   She finished its walls for you . . .
Your father was Enki-Nudimmud, 
   Your mother was Ninti, Queen of the Underworld . . .

You, who soothe the mouth, knead the dough with a great paddle, 
   You sweeten the bread bowl with dates.
You bake the bread in a great oven, 
   You stack the barley in piles to sprout . . .
You, who slake thirst, dampen the piles of barley malt, 
   While your great dogs guard them from thieves . . .
You ferment the bread and malt in a jar, 
   Waves of foam rise and fall . . .
You, divine patron of brewers, spread the mash on great reed mats, 
   You cool the wort . . .
You press the mash with both hands, 
   You filter the honey sweet brew . . .
Your strainer, Ninkasi, makes sweet music, 
   As you skillfully drain the wort into a storage jar . . .
When you serve the filtered beer from the jar, 
   It gushes out like the Tigris and Euphrates . . .
grinding wheat grains, placing a portion of them in a wooden basin and kneading them with water into a dough. The dough is cut into thick loaves which are very lightly baked. Meanwhile, the remainder of the grains is moistened with water, germinated for three-five days, sun-dried, ground and mixed with the loaves of bread which are soaked in water in a wooden barrel. Bouza from a previous brewing is added to serve as a starter. The mixture is allowed to ferment at room temperature for twenty-four hours, following which the wort is sieved to remove large particles and diluted with water to a desired consistency. Like other opaque beers, bouza has a very short shelf-life and is expected to be consumed within a day. Its pH increases to between 3.9 and 4.0 and its alcoholic content to between 3.8-4.2% within a 24-hour period.\textsuperscript{197}

A Hymn to Ninkasi describes how Sumerians brewed beer. They baked a bread (Akkadian: \textit{bappir}) from barley or emmer wheat. The dried bread was crumbled, and cooked with water and sprouted barley. This mash was spread on a large mat to cool. The mash was seasoned with date honey and fermented. Finally, it was filtered through a strainer into a storage jar. Unfiltered beer was drunk from a common bowl through long reeds or metal straws.

Beer is mentioned frequently in the Bible (Deut 29:6, 1 Sam 1:15; Isa 29:9; 28:7; 24:9), and was offered to Yahweh as a sacrifice (Num 28:7; Deut 14:26). Wise rulers (Prov 31:4), Nazirites (Num 6:3; Judg 13:4-14) and priests on days they were scheduled to enter the sanctuary (Lev 10:9), did not drink beer. The poor drank beer to forget their suffering (Prov 31:6). Fools, who drank too much beer, became drunks (Ps 69:12; Isa 5:11+22; 56:12), started fights (Prov 20:1) and became false prophets (Micah 2:11).

The taste of the bread baked by the Egyptians would have depended on the grain used to make the bread. Archaeologists or archaeobotanists like Mary Anne Murray (University College London) excavating the workers’ village at the pyramids on the Giza Plain recover seeds using a flotation tank.\textsuperscript{198} The flotation tank is simply a vat full of flowing water. Seeds or barley and emmer wheat float to the top of the water. Dirt and stones sink to the bottom. These seeds contain little of the gluten that makes bread light and crispy today. Large cake-like loaves high in calories and starch were baked over an open fire in large bell-shaped pots. Each loaf fed several people at one meal more economically than baking flat bread. By baking bread in pots the Egyptians could feed several hundred or even several thousand people quickly and efficiently.
Bread pots (Egyptian: *bedja*) one of the most common types of pottery in any archaeological site of the Old Kingdom (2575-2134 B.C.E.). The pot was made upside down over a cone, leaving a smooth and regular interior that was lined with finer clay so the loaf would not stick to the sides. The thick walls were formed of coarse Nile mud mixed with chopped grass and sand. The grass chaff burned out when the pot was fired, leaving a highly porous wall that retained and regulated heat so that the outer crust would not burn before the interior of the loaf was baked. *Bedja* pots came in all sizes for baking conical loaves that ranged in size from small buns to large cakes.

In 1991 a mechanical digging machine gouged out a huge trench to the east of the building on the Giza Plain where priests embalmed the body of Menkaure, the pharaoh who built the third pyramid. Out of that trench came thousands of Old Kingdom pot-sherds. When Mark Lehner (Harvard University) examined the trench, they found two intact bakeries; the large fell-shaped pots in which the bread was baked still littering the floor. Ancient tomb scenes show offering bearers carrying large conical loaves of exactly the same shape as these pots would have produced.

Bakers made large conical loaves of emmer or barley bread in these ceramic pots. Bread and beer were the basic rations for workers. Some believe that pot-baked bread was for special occasions like temple festivals and that the workers would have been fed a simpler bread like *pita*.

Two remarkable hero stories in the book of Judges -- *Jael Delivers Israel from Harosheth-ha-goiim* (Judg 4:17-24) and *A Woman delivers Thebez from Abimelech* (Judg 9:22-57) -- celebrate women as chiefs. Like Shamgar, David, Ehud, Gideon and Samson, Jael and Thebez rally their tribes to deliver their households from slavery to their enemies.

A predictable signature of a chief in early Israel is an unorthodox weapon. During the Iron I period the Philistines set the standards for military hardware with the weapons the forged from iron. Yet these state of the art weapons wielded by the Philistines and the soldiers of the other surplus cultures in Syria-Palestine were no match for the unorthodox weapons wielded by heroes lifted up by Yahweh to deliver the Hebrews from slavery. Ehud uses a two-edged knife (Judg 3:16). Jael uses a mallet and a peg (Judg 4: 21). Shamgar uses an ox-goad (Judg 4:31). Thebez a stone rolling pin (Judg 9:53). Samson uses the jawbone of an ass (Judg 15:15). The heroes in the book of Judges use the tools with
which they feed their household to protect them.

**Jael (Judg 4:17-24)**

In *Jael Delivers Israel from Harosheth-ha-goiim* (Judg 4:17-24), Sisera invades the tent of Jael with the intention of raping her, and taking over the household of Heber, her husband. Jael allows Sisera to think that she will be his accomplice against her husband. Foolishly, the overconfident Sisera lays down to rest in Jael’s tent. When he has fallen asleep, she fetches a hammer and a peg and kills him.

**Hammer**

Jael’s weapons are unorthodox, but they are familiar. The same skills and strength that she uses to pitch her tent, she uses to defend it. She drives the peg through Sisera’s skull with the same speed with which she normally sinks it into the ground. The man who penetrated the door of her tent is penetrated by the woman he threatened.

**Woman of Thebez (Judg 9:22-57)**

In *A Woman delivers Thebez from Abimelech* (Judg 9:22-57) Abimelech attacks Thebez (Hebrew: Tirzah) and breaches the wall into the lower city. The people of Thebez take refuge in the upper city. Abimelech fights his way to the wall of the upper city and tries to set fire to its wooden gates. While Abimelech is close to the wall, a woman drops a grinding stone on him, breaking his neck.

Like the weapons of Jael the weapon of the woman of Thebez is unorthodox, but familiar. The same skills and strength that she uses to grind flour every day for her household, she uses to defend it. She crushes the head of Abimelech like she crush the heads of grain. The man who crushed the gate of her city is crushed by the woman he threatened.

Mortally wounded Abimelech orders the warrior who carries his shield to kill him so that people cannot say that a woman killed him. Instead, Abimelech’s shame-filled death became a taunt: *Who killed Abimelech son of Jerubbaal? Did not a woman drop a grinding stone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez?* (2 Sam 11:21)

The tools of peace become the weapons of war. Ordinary people ... *beat their plowshares into swords* (Joel 3:10). The same things that women use to make their homes, they also use to

**Diachronic** methods examine the origins, development, history and change that takes place over time. Diachronic approaches give a history, like a motion picture documentary. They focus on how things change over time.

**Synchronic** methods give a snapshot of a particular system at a particular moment in time. Synchronic methods focus on how something is as a given moment and how each part fits into the system.
defend them. They are not professional warriors; they are citizen soldiers. They fight in support of Yahweh the divine warrior. Their powerlessness makes it clear to audiences that it is Yahweh, and not Thebez or Jael who delivers the people from their enemies. Yahweh does not lift up professional soldiers to lead the Hebrews from slavery to freedom. The heroes in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are ordinary men and women who use the tools of their trade to deliver the Hebrews from their enemies. The woman of Thebez kills Abimelech with the upper half (Spanish: mano) of her grinding stone made of basalt a hard, black volcanic rock. Likewise, Jael kills Sisera with her mallet and peg made of wood.

The physical strength of Thebez and Jael, like the physical strength of average IA women, is remarkable. Everyday IA women hauled water, toted fuel, milked goats, spun wool, weaved cloth, ground grain and baked bread for themselves and their households. The average weight of a grinding stone at Tell al-ʿUmayari in Jordan, for example, is six pounds, thirteen ounces. In the 1998 excavation season alone some eighteen saddle stones and some forty-five grinding stones were recovered. The woman of Thebez undoubtedly would have been strong enough to drop a grinding stone. Her strength wins the battle for Thebez and for Israel. She is an ordinary woman who uses the ordinary resources at hand to achieve heroic results.

In the world of the Bible women ground grain using a saddle stone (Hebrew: pelah tahtit). This grain mill had two parts. The lower part was the saddle -- a concave stone that was about 1 ½ to 3 feet long and ½ to 1 ½ ft wide. The upper part was the grinding stone -- a loaf-shaped stone (Hebrew: pelah rekeb; Spanish: mano). The grinding stone could be grasped easily with one hand. It was about as long as the saddle stone was wide.

Typically, these mills were made of black basalt because the hard yet porous stone provides a rough surface and many cutting edges. Both parts of these mills, whole or broken, are found in Bronze and Iron Age sites throughout Syria-Palestine.

Throwing her grinding stone was not only an act of strength, but also an act of desperation for Thebez. Once the grinding stone was gone, she could not longer make bake bread for her household which women did every day.

Furthermore, basalt was a luxury in her region of Syria-Palestine. There were no local quarries for basalt, making it difficult for her to replace the grinding stone. Mills were so critical to the survival of a household that they could not be used as collateral for a loan. No one shall
take a mill or even the grinding stone as collateral, for that would be holding every member of the household hostage. (Deut 24:6)

*A Woman Delivers Thebez from Abimelech and Jael Delivers Israel from Sisera* are not just celebrating the physical strength of Iron I period women. Their feats are not just human accomplishments; they are divine actions. These traditions are celebrating Yahweh who uses the powerless -- like a woman grinding grain, to shame the powerful --like a man attacking a city. The punishments of the powerful are proportionate (Latin: *talis*) to their crimes. Abimelech wanted to rule Shechem *single-handedly* as its head (Judg 9: 37), therefore he executed his seventy covenant partners upon (‘al) a single stone. Therefore, he is executed by a *single* woman (Hebrew: *ishah achat*) who drops a *single stone* upon (‘al) his head. 202

Most grain was ground in the first floor courtyard of pillared houses. But there is some archaeological evidence for grinding grain on the second floor of a house. In 1994 a three-hundred pound mill was recovered at Tel ‘Umayri on top of mud brick rubble that once had been the upper story of a pillared house. Although it would have been difficult to carry such a heavy mill to the roof of the house, once it was there, women could grind grain more comfortably in the breeze under the shade of reed canopies.

Therefore the *tower* (Judg 9:51) in *A Woman Delivers Thebez from Abimelech* may have simply been the roof of one of the pillared houses whose outer walls ringed the village like the house of Rahab in the *Story of Rahab as a Host* (Josh 2:15). Because of the labor involved in building pillared houses, they often served more than one purpose. From here, defenders could easily throw rocks, sling stones, shoot arrows and throw spears at invaders.

The traditions also celebrate Thebez and Jael for being wise, and shame Abimelech and Sisera for being fools. Only fools come close enough to the wall of a city and put themselves at risk of being killed by stones dropped on them by defenders. The strategy of the wise was to force the defenders of a city to waste their ammunition by firing it at the attackers who remained at a distance and safely out of harm’s way.
Further Reading


Chapter 03

Egyptian Economics 101
The Plagues Stories (Exod 7:14—13:10)

In the Plagues Stories (Exod. 7:14—13:10 :: Ps 78:43-51, Ps 105: 27-36) in Death of the First Born of Egypt creation story (Exod 1:7--13:16) snakes, frogs, mosquitoes, flies and locusts attack the Egyptians, the Nile and its canals, the air and the cattle.

What do animal artifacts contribute to the understanding of the creatures that appear in the Plagues Stories? Violence is seldom random. It is generally a critique of the powerful by the powerless. Identifying institutions in economy of Egypt which snakes, frogs, mosquitoes, flies and locusts attack the Egyptians, the Nile and its canals, the air and the cattle represent will demonstrate how powerless slaves understood the powerful surplus economy of Egypt where they lived.

The Plagues Stories demonstrate the sterility of the old world that the pharaohs built. They are a parody or satire that ridicules Egypt and its traditions by treating them flippanly and by telling the creation stories of Egypt in an inappropriate and trivial manner. They contrast the Egypt of the pharaohs with the world of Yahweh.

In the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth (Gen. 1:1—2:4) the world of Yahweh is orderly and its creatures are noble. The firstborn of this world plant the land and populate it with children. In the Plagues Stories the world of the pharaohs is disorderly and polluted with ignoble creatures. In the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth Yahweh hangs a light and then creates a world. In the Plagues Stories Yahweh decommissions the world of Egypt and then turns out the light. Pharaoh’s firstborn are stillborn.

In the Egypt that the pharaohs create, fertility is a curse. In the Israel that Yahweh creates, fertility is a blessing. The plagues do not destroy Egypt, but simply dramatize that its fertility is superficial. They demonstrate that the fertility of Egypt only plagues the cosmos with creatures that are out of place. They portray Egypt as destroying life rather than supporting it. The Nile River not only brings the life-giving organisms and minerals to the plants and animals of Egypt, but deadly red clay from landslides upriver as well. Swamp frogs not only control the populations of insects like gnats and flies, but also attract these germ-bearers to animals and humans. Livestock not only enriches the diet of humans and lightens their work, but also infects them with hoof-and-mouth disease. Rain not only causes the crops to grow, but the locusts to migrate. The same principle of fertility that creates the world of the pharaohs also destroys it.

To understand the Plagues Stories it is necessary to understand something of both the technology and traditions of Egypt. The creatures in the plagues are caricatures of the great households of Egypt and their totems.

Totems are the animal ancestors who give birth to humans and then protect and befriend them. The Nile is the totem of the household of Hapi. The sun is the totem of the household of
Ra. The bull is the totem of the household of Apis. Plagues shame these great households. The Nile and its canals, which were the pride of Egypt, are satirized as a sewer that pollutes the fields and infects the villages. The cattle bred by temple ranchers and the great Apis bull are scorned as carriers of the hoof-and-mouth disease that decimate Egypt’s population.

One pattern proposed for the Plagues Stories divides them into ten episodes (Hebrew: ‘eser makkot) with one plague in each episode. There are plagues (1) of water pollution, (2) of frogs, (3) of mosquitoes, (4) of flies, (5) of hoof-and-mouth disease, (6) of boils, (7) of hail, (8) of locusts, (9) of darkness, and (10) of sudden infant death. This popular pattern of ten is understood as having developed from earlier stories with patterns of eight, seven, three, one or no plagues at all.

Other patterns proposed for the Plagues Stories divide them into three episodes on the basis of the weapons that Moses and Aaron use against Egypt. (Sarna 1991:38) The Enuma Elish Stories from Mesopotamia arm Marduk from a vast arsenal. He wields snakes (Enuma 1:134), spells (Enuma 1:161), scepters (Enuma 4:29), arrows (Enuma 4:35-40) or winds (Enuma 4:47-49). Moses and Aaron wield divine power by stretching out their hands (Exod. 9:15, 22, 29, 33; 10:21-22) or use a staff called the “Divine Finger” (Exod. 7:15-20; 8:1-15; 10:12-13). Moses and Aaron also throw soot into the air to bring on darkness (Exod. 9:8).

The pattern used here for the Plagues Stories parallels the pattern in the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth. The intention of both creation stories is to demonstrate that Yahweh alone destroys chaos and creates cosmos.

Creation story language appears throughout the Plagues Stories. For example, the divine title “Yahweh, our Godparent (Hebrew: elohim)” (Exod. 9:30) rarely occurs in the Bible except in the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth and in the Plagues Stories. Furthermore, the events of each day are labeled as works of creation—“signs” (Exod. 4:21; 7:3, 21) and “wonders” (Exod. 4:21). Likewise, “the land was filled with them” (Exod 1:7) is intended as an explicit reference to Gen 1:28 and Gen 9:1.

| Day one: | Nile and Canals (Exod. 7:14-24) :: Water Below and Water Above (Gen. 1:6-8) |
| Day two: | Frogs and Mosquitoes (Exod. 7:25—8:3) :: Fish and Birds (Gen. 1:20-23) |
| Day three: | Cattle and Humans (Exod. 9:1-12) :: Cattle and Humans (Gen. 1:24-31) |
| Day four: | Grain and Dates (Exod. 9:13—10:20) :: Earth and Sea (Gen. 1:9-13) |
| Day five: | Darkness and Light (Exod. 10:21-29) :: Light and Darkness (Gen. 1:3-5) |
| Day six: | Firstborn and Heirs (Exod. 11:1-10+12:29-32) :: Male and Female (Gen. 1:26-31) |
| Day seven: | Passover (Exod. 12:1—13:16) :: Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-4) |

The centerpiece of the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth is a cosmogony (Gen. 1:3-31) of six days when noble twins like light and darkness (Gen. 1:3-5) are born. On the seventh day, Yahweh endows this new world with the gift of Sabbath. Similarly, the Plagues Stories also form...
a cosmogony of six days on which ignoble twins like the Nile and its canals are born. On the seventh day, Yahweh endows this new world with the gift of Passover.

Twins are paired in both stories, but their birth order is different. The Nile and the canals (Exod. 7:14-24) are parallel to the waters under and above (Gen. 1:6-8). The frogs and mosquitoes and flies (Exod. 7:25--8:28) are parallel to the water creatures and birds (Gen. 1:20-33). The cattle and humans in the book of Exodus (Exod. 9:1-12) are parallel to the cattle and humans in the book of Genesis (Gen. 1:24-31). The fields of grain and date palms (Exod. 9:13—10:20) are parallel to the earth and sea (Gen. 1:9-13). The darkness and light in the book of Exodus (Exod. 10:21-28) are parallel to the light and darkness in the book of Genesis (Gen. 1:3--5) and the firstborn and heirs (Exod. 11:1-10) are parallel to the man and the woman (Gen. 1:26-31).

The plagues reflect natural disasters common in Africa. Therefore, the events described in the Plagues Stories are credible. (Hort ZAW 69 (1957): 84-103) As they appear in the Bible, however, they have been artistically stylized and telescoped to reflect the assessment of such natural events by the Hebrews. For the Egyptians natural disasters were just a part of life, not an indictment of their way of life. For the Hebrews, however, these natural disasters were clear symptoms that the surplus economy of Egypt was a failure. Egypt was not a “Black Land” (Egyptian: kemet) bursting with life, but rather the “House of Slaves” (Hebrew: bet ‘abadim, Exod 13:3) reeking of death. (Fretheim 1991: 385)

Nile (Exod 7:17) and it Canals (Exod 7:19)

The Nile and its canals are polluted by a phenomenon that occurs periodically in Egypt. The sources of the Nile River are fed by melting snow and summer rains in the mountains of Ethiopia. During the rainy season the waters of the White Nile River and the Blue Nile River fill with tropical red earth. Normally, the sediment settles to the river bottoms before reaching the Nile River during June. When the rainy season is particularly heavy in Ethiopia, however, the sediment enters the Nile River and turns it red. Flagellates and purple bacteria grow in the sediment choked water upsetting the oxygen balance killing the fish.

Flagellates (Latin: trichomonas) posses long, slender tails used for locomotion. They multiply by binary fission. Two species of flagellates infect humans.

Purple bacteria use energy from the sun but extract electrons from substances other than water, and therefore release no oxygen. Most species are strict anaerobes and live in the sediment of ponds and lakes.

In Egyptian tradition the divine patron of the Nile is Hapi, who lives in a great womb cave (Egyptian: qerti) at the first rapids on the Nile between Elephantine Island and Philae Island. The Nile River flows from the cave throughout the year, but from June through September-October, Hapi increases the volume of water (Egyptian: akhet) to fertilize farmland along the banks of the Nile.
Hapi is portrayed as both male and female – with both breasts and a beard. The beard is curled at the end to identify the flooding of the Nile with Osiris, the divine patron of the afterlife whose beard is also curled, rising from the dead. At a very early period Hapi not only absorbed the attributes of Osiris, but also those of Nun, the waters of chaos from which Ra, the divine patron of the sun, emerged on the first day of the creation. Therefore, Hapi became the godparent of all the living.

The full breasts of a nursing mother, the rolls of fat around a male waist, a crown of reeds and lotus blossoms, and the frogs and crocodiles with which Hapi is surrounded reflect the blessings of life and prosperity that Hapi bestows on Egypt. The reeds and the lotus are the first crops to appear as the waters of the Nile recede and are a promise of a fertile growing season to follow. The teeming crocodiles and frogs symbolize all living creatures – great and small – throughout Egypt, whose life is traced back to the Nile.

The pollution of the Nile unmasks Hapi as a murderer, who does not just give life but takes it as well. The same river that saves the life of the newborn Moses, also takes the lives of other Hebrew newborns. (Exod 1:22-2:10) Water, crocodiles and frogs not only bless Egypt, they curse it. The pollution not only curses life in the land of Egypt for which Hapi is responsible, but the afterlife as well. The crops will not bloom, and the dead will not rise.

Frogs (Exod 8:2) and Mosquitoes (Exod 8:16), Flies (Exod 8:21)

Heket (Heqet, Heka), Heqt, the divine patron of fertility, is portrayed with the head of a frog. She is the wife of Khnum, who fashioned humans from clay. She was associated with fertility and was thought to assist women at childbirth. Hence the plague may have been taken as retribution for the decree ordering the midwives to kill the newborn males at birth. (Sarna 1991: 40).

The Egyptian goddess of childbirth, and protector of the dead.

She is portrayed as a frog, a symbol of life and fertility (presumably because of the millions of them spawned after the annual inundation of the Nile), or as a woman with a frog's head.

Women often wore amulets of her during childbirth.

Heket was the divine midwife for both humans and crops. She was depicted as a frog, or a woman with the head of a frog. Egyptian midwives were called the "Slaves of Heket".

The ancient Egyptians saw thousands of frogs appear all along the Nile at certain times of the year. This appearance of the reptile came to symbolize fruitfulness and coming life.

In the story of the triplets who would be pharaohs, she was the goddess of magically "hastens the birth", in an unspecified manner.
She originally appears in the pyramid texts where she helps the pharaoh ascend into the sky. She is also connected with the Osiris myth in the "Funeral of Osiris" at Dendera:

Osiris, ithyphallic and bearded, in mummied form, lying upon his bier; over his feet and his body hover the hawks. At the head kneels Hathor, "Mistress of Amentet, who weepeth for 'her brother'," and at the foot is a frog symbol of the goddess Heqet, beneath the bier are an ibis-headed god holding the Utchat, two serpents, and the god Bes.

As such, she was not only a goddess of birth, but of rebirth, because of her life-giving powers.

Amulets of Heqet were worn by women to protect them while they gave birth. During the Middle Kingdom ritual ivory knives and clappers (a type of percussional musical instrument) bore her name or image as protection for inside the home.

There was a Ptolemaic temple to Heqet at Qus, of which only a pylon remains. She was also known as "Lady of Her-wer": A tomb at Tuna el-Gebel has text speaks about a procession in her honor where she asks that the temple of Heqet at Her-wer be restored and protected from inundation, but this temple has not been found, yet.

As the daughter of the sun-god Re she is called 'Eye of Re' and 'Mother of the gods'. She is regarded as the consort of Khnum.

Gnats and mosquitoes are indigenous to Egypt; lice are not. (Greenstein 1993: 90)

The Hebrew word translated “flies” occurs only in connection with this plague and is not precisely defined. It may derive from the sense of “sam”; Jewish tradition interprets “wild animals”. The word resembles the word for “locusts” and the sense of “fly” suits Ps 78:45. (Greenstein 1993:92)
Links

Kadesh Barnea (tell el Qudeirat)
http://www.deltasinai.com/sinai-01.htm

Flagellates
http://www.cvm.okstate.edu/instruction/kocan/vpar5333/5333iid.htm

Purple Bacteria
http://www.sidwell.edu/us/science/vlb5/Labs/Classification_Lab/Bacteria/Proteobacteria/Purple/

Hapi, God of the Nile, Fertility, the North and South
http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/hapi.html
Further Reading


Petrie, W.M. "Egypt and Israel." Pages 25-36 in , 1911.


The Walls of Jericho: War or Worship?
Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho (Josh 5:13—6:27)

What do the excavations of Tel el Sultan contribute to the understanding of the Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho (Josh 5:13—6:27)?

For many, the books of Joshua (Hebrew: Yehoshu’a) and Judges (Hebrew: Shofetim) tell how miraculous military victories confirmed the Hebrews’ faith in Yahweh. Nonetheless, archaeology cannot confirm that there were Hebrews in Syria-Palestine when the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. Furthermore, the genocides that took place during the Crusades, during the conquest of the Americas, and during World War II have made Jews, Christians, and Muslims painfully aware how easily any reading of the Bible that understands God to be authorizing the faithful to kill their enemies can be misused.

The events of Joshua and Judges are set in the Iron Age (1200-1150 BCE) after the empires of Egypt, Hatti, and Mycenae collapsed. This political vacuum made it possible for smaller regional cultures like ancient Israel to begin their struggles for independence.

The time when the events in the Books of Joshua and Judges take place, however, is not the same as the time when these stories were told. The events took place between 1200 and 1150 BCE, but the versions of these stories in the Bible today developed after 721 BCE, when the Assyrians destroyed the Hebrew state of Israel and its capital city of Samaria.

The Hebrew state of Judah, which had miraculously survived the Assyrian invasion of Syria-Palestine in 721 BCE, and in 640 BCE crowned Josiah king of Judah at the age of eight, after his father’s assassination. His reign lasted thirty-one years (640–609 BCE).

The name “Josiah” uses the same three Hebrew letters as the name “Joshua,” and Josiah considered himself to be “Joshua Reborn”. Josiah was a warrior-king whose soldiers campaigned from Jerusalem and Jericho in the east into the former territories of Judah in the west. Consequently, the Bible portrays Joshua conquering the same land (2 Kings 23:19; 2 Chron. 34:6).

The Assyrian empire, which had previously dominated Syria-Palestine, was in decline, making the changes that characterized Josiah’s reign possible. Josiah carried out domestic reforms as well. Following the discovery of a scroll containing traditions preserved in the book of Deuteronomy, Josiah rededicated the royal temple as the state sanctuary. He began celebrating Passover as a state holiday, and decommissioned all the other regional sanctuaries of Yahweh throughout Judah.

The traditions in the books of Joshua-Judges developed in the same climate of nationalism, when any household that challenged Josiah’s reforms was labeled a traitor, a “Canaanite,” or a “prostitute” by Josiah’s royal prophets. Josiah polarized Judah. Fatalism spread. There was little tolerance for diversity. Josiah’s fervor led him to a martyr’s death at
Megiddo while trying to block Pharaoh Neco II (610–595 BCE) from reinforcing the Assyrians who were retreating from the Babylonians (2 Kings 22:1—23:30).

Judah’s self-searching continued after the death of Josiah and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BCE. Some of the people of Judah who were deported by the Babylonians began to reread the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Samuel-Kings from a point of view that scholars today call the “Deuteronomistic History”, abbreviated “DTH”.

DTH charged that it was not Yahweh who had failed to protect the land from its enemies, but the people of Yahweh who had failed to obey their covenant with Yahweh. If the people had kept the covenant, the land would have remained in the hands of the Hebrews. If, from the days of Joshua onward, the Hebrews had put to death all those who did not worship Yahweh in Jerusalem, the land would have survived. Only when one people worshiped one God in one place would the land and children that Yahweh promised Abraham and Sarah be safe from their enemies. Until the time of Josiah, no such tradition of conformity had existed in ancient Israel. The Hebrews had worshiped Yahweh throughout the land at sanctuaries from Dan to Beersheba. Yet the exclusiveness of DTH characterizes the books of Joshua and Judges today.

The traditions in the books of Joshua and Judges are companions to those in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers (Exod. 1:7—Num. 27:11) and in the book of Deuteronomy (Num. 27:12—Deut. 34:12). The setting where these traditions developed, however, may be more liturgical than military. These traditions may say more about worship than about war. They may not celebrate wars of liberation from Egypt and wars of the conquest of Syria-Palestine. They may be traditions that celebrate Yahweh as the divine patron of the Hebrews, whom the book of Exodus remembers for blessing the Hebrews with children, and whom the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges remember for blessing them with land.

Covenant between Yahweh and Israel (Josh. 1:1-18)

The book of Joshua opens with a covenant entitling the Hebrews in Gilead to cross the Jordan River and settle in the land west of the river (Josh. 1:1-18). Gilead is the Bible-Belt of early Israel. Hardliners like Elijah came from Gilead (1 Kings 17:1). This covenant between Yahweh and Israel is parallel to a covenant between Yahweh and Abraham (Gen. 11:27—12:8). The people that Yahweh creates in the books of Genesis and Exodus are endowed with land in the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges.

Joshua immediately executes his commission by granting land to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (Josh. 1:10-18). This simple transfer of title with which the book of Joshua opens is elaborately detailed in the land grants with which it closes (Josh. 12:1—19:51). Ancestor stories and hero stories survey the land (Josh. 2:1—12:24). Genealogies identify the tracts assigned to each household (Josh. 13:1—21:45).

The Hebrews take possession of the land for which they had not labored, and villages that they had not built, and settle in them. They eat the fruits of their vineyards and olive groves that they did not plant (Josh. 22:1—24:33). This land is not the prize of conquest; it is the gift of Yahweh.
The third-day motif in the covenant further emphasizes that the Hebrews’ settlement in the land west of the river is the work of Yahweh, and not their work. The third day is the day of Yahweh (Gen. 40:13-20; 42:17-18; Exod. 19:10-16; 2 Kings 18:9-10). It is the day on which Yahweh draws life from death, cosmos from chaos, and freedom from slavery.

Story of Rahab as Host (Josh. 2:1-24+6:22-25)

A Story of Rahab as Host begins when Joshua dispatches two warriors from Shittim on a reconnaissance mission. The destination of the warriors is not Jericho, but simply “the land” (Josh. 2:24). They go directly to the house of a woman named Rahab. She greets these strangers with hospitality, in contrast to the ruler of the city, who will threaten them with violence. Almost immediately the ruler of the land sends soldiers to question Rahab about collaborating with Joshua’s warriors. The story ends when she rescues the two warriors with cleverness and courage.

The characters in the story play roles in a society shaped by the tributary economics of Egypt at the end of the Late Bronze period (1400–1200 BCE). Egypt stationed governors and military detachments, like the soldiers who interrogate Rahab, in Syria-Palestine to represent its interests. These governors leased the land to rulers, like the monarch in the story, to harvest raw materials like flax and to produce manufactured goods like rope for Egypt. Surrounding trade centers, like the city in the story, were villages of farmers and herders, like the household of Rahab. Governors set quotas of goods and services for each village. Representatives of these villages, like Rahab, lived in cities to protect their goods in transit.

The political reforms of Pharaoh Akhenaten (1364–1347 BCE) plunged Egypt into economic turmoil. Egypt recalled its governors and soldiers from Syria-Palestine. Those Egyptian officials who remained were powerless to harvest and process raw materials. Households began to abandon their villages and pioneer new ones in the hills above the Jordan River. Some, like Joshua and his warriors, became raiders who attacked caravans moving to and from trade centers. Officials filled diplomatic pouches to Akhenaten’s government at Amarna with urgent appeals for help. These letters describe conditions similar to those in the books of Joshua and Judges (Fig. 29).

References to flax and rope in the story may suggest that the household of Rahab made rope from flax for Egypt. Wild flax is a delicate plant with beautiful blue flowers and is native to Syria-Palestine. As early as 5000 BCE, farmers began domesticating the first of some two hundred species eventually used throughout the world of the Bible for linseed oil, fodder, cloth, and rope. The Gezer Almanac assigns a month for harvesting flax. Farmers pulled the stalks when the seeds were ripe and dried them (See Fig. 2). Refiners pressed the seeds to extract linseed oil. The dregs became animal fodder. After soaking the stalks to ret, or loosen, the outer fibers, they spread them on rooftops to dry. Weavers hackled or combed the fibers from the inner core and spun them into thread. The short, tangled fibers left over from the combing were tow (Judg. 16:9), which made a coarse yarn. Flax and wool were the standard fibers used to weave clothing until the development of cotton.
“Rahab” is a nickname that praises Yahweh for enlarging a household (1 Chron. 23:17; 24:21). Nevertheless, the opening episode introduces Rahab as a prostitute. Joshua’s warriors may have gone to her house to have sex, but the relationship between the warriors and the woman may be much more sophisticated. The story contrasts Rahab’s shameful title and honorable actions with the honorable title and shameful actions of Joshua. It uses a label like “prostitute” for Rahab in its crisis in order to refute it in the denouement. With the exception of this label of shame, the story treats Rahab with honor throughout. Even though Rahab subverts the male establishments of both Joshua and the ruler of the land, her behavior is neither prohibited nor scandalous, like the behavior of Ruth (Ruth 3:1-18), of Tamar (Gen. 38:1-30), or of Bathsheba (1 Kings 1:5-53). The story contains no demurs insisting that Rahab is not a suitable candidate for her mission. In the books of Samuel-Kings, Jesse apologizes: “there remains yet the youngest, but behold he is keeping the sheep” (1 Sam. 16:11). In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet demurs: “Yahweh, our Creator, I do not know how to speak” (Jer. 1:6). Not one character in this story of Rahab, however, apologizes that she is only a prostitute.

Later biblical and rabbinical traditions also treat Rahab with honor. The books of Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles (1 Chron. 2:10) honor Rahab as the mother of Boaz. Respect for Rahab continues in the earliest translations and commentaries. Early Jewish translations of the Bible into the Aramaic language, which are called “Targumim,” translate the Hebrew word for “prostitute” into Aramaic as “innkeeper.” Rabbis like Rashi argue that Rahab is a “grocer.” The Letter to the Hebrews honors her as a woman of faith (Heb. 11:31). The rabbis celebrate Rahab as one of the four most beautiful women in the world. Talmud has Joshua marry Rahab, so that, ironically, he masters Syria-Palestine only to be mastered by Syria-Palestine’s most engaging woman. At least eight of their descendants were prophets of the stature of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Huldah (b. Meg 15a).

The time when the Story of Rahab as Host was told may offer one explanation for the contrast between her title and her actions. Like many of these traditions about Joshua, who lived at the end of the Late Bronze period, this story developed during the reign of Josiah. Josiah called all the people of Judah to the temple to renew the covenant (2 Kings 23:21-23; 2 Chron. 35:1-19), consequently the book of Joshua portrays Joshua calling the Hebrews to the sanctuary at Shechem to renew their covenant with Yahweh (Josh. 24: 1-28). The household of Rahab considered the temple in Jerusalem as little more than a royal chapel, so may have continued to worship Yahweh at the Gilgal sanctuary of Jericho. Josiah and the household of David could go up to the temple to tell the stories of the great works that Yahweh did in Jerusalem, but the household of Rahab would go to Gilgal to tell the stories of the great works that Yahweh did at Jericho. Consequently, Josiah’s prophets labeled Rahab a prostitute, not because of the work she did in the Late Bronze period, but because of the political position that her household took in the Iron Age (2 Kings 9:22; Isa. 23:16-17; Nahum 3:4). She is a prostitute because her household was in political exile in the days of Josiah. A similar use of the term appears in a Trial of Samaria in the book of Micah (Micah 1:2-7), which does not indict Samaria for failing to prosecute women and men who engage in sexual intercourse for a living. The trial indict the state for negotiating covenants for trade and military assistance that provided luxury for a few and poverty for many. Micah parodies the titles of the women whose marriages ratified these state covenants by labeling them “prostitutes,” and the goods and services that Samaria enjoyed from the covenants as “the wages of prostitutes.” Therefore, it was not the household of Joshua
in early Israel that labeled Rahab a prostitute, but the household of Josiah during the final days of the monarchy in Judah.

In contrast to the other traditions in the book of Joshua, Rahab, and not Joshua and his warriors, is the protagonist in the story. Even more unusual, in contrast to Rahab who is wise, the story casts Joshua and his warriors as fools. The tradition celebrates Rahab as more faithful to Yahweh than Joshua and his warriors, and as a better warrior. She also outwits the ruler of the land and his soldiers.

Joshua has seen all the powerful events that Yahweh has done at the Red Sea and east of the Jordan Valley. Rahab has only heard about these great works. Yet Joshua is doubting, while Rahab is believing. Joshua sees, and does not believe. Rahab only hears, but believes. When Yahweh commissions Joshua to take the land, the appropriate response is for him to go and take the land. Instead Joshua sends out a reconnaissance mission. Today military science requires reconnaissance, but herem war in the world of the Bible forbids it. Reconnaissance missions determine the strength of the enemy, which in herem war is irrelevant. Warriors are expected to go into herem war at a disadvantage in order to highlight the victory as divine rather than human. To prepare for herem war, a chief like Joshua may use prophets (1 Kings 22:5), divination (2 Kings 13:15), necromancy (1 Sam. 28:6), and the ephod with its urim and thummim (1 Sam. 30:7-8; 1 Sam. 28:6), but not reconnaissance. Reconnaissance characterizes warriors as petty (Num. 13:1—14:15), cowardly (Deut. 1:19-46), greedy (Judg. 1:22-26), and heretical (Judg. 18:1-31). Going into battle against a superior opponent is an act of faith that highlights the victory as Yahweh’s, not Israel’s. Jerubbaal (Gideon) twice reduces the size of the tribe mustered to defend Israel against the Midianites (Judg. 7:1--8:28). Likewise, Deuteronomy (Deut. 13:13-19) assumes that the size of a city convicted of treason is of no consequence to the punitive expedition ordered against it.

Rahab has all of the military skills that Joshua lacks. Joshua personally selects the messengers to gather intelligence for him, yet they are so incompetent that the soldiers of the land detect them immediately. Rahab is a master of combat tactics. She is an expert in designing safe houses. She knows how to use camouflage and distribute misinformation. She knows all the commando tactics necessary to scale down the walls of a city, and just how to avoid the soldiers who patrol the border along the Jordan River.

Rahab is also more faithful to Yahweh than Joshua is. She has no doubts that Yahweh will conquer the land. Therefore, she asks his warriors to spare her household when Yahweh sweeps through the city as Yahweh swept through Egypt slaying their firstborn (Exod. 12:23). Like the Hebrews who celebrated their first Passover from slavery in Egypt by marking their doors with lamb’s blood, Rahab celebrates the Passover of her household by marking her window with a blood red rope (Josh. 2:18; 6:25). Finally, Rahab is more powerful than the ruler of the land, who considers her both ambitious and capable of overthrowing him. He had her under surveillance. His soldiers also respect Rahab, and obey her orders to search for the messengers outside the walls.

The crisis episode (Josh. 2:1) condenses the actions that appear in most hospitality stories (Gen. 18:1-15; 19:1-22; Judg. 19:1-30; 2 Sam. 17:15-22). The commission that Joshua gives to
the messengers now almost completely eclipses Rahab’s actions. Since Joshua is not the protagonist, it would be better to read the commission simply as a clause that modifies the strangers to whom Rahab offers hospitality: “two warriors, whom Joshua ben Nun dispatched from a sacred grove of eucalyptus trees with the orders: ‘Go and scout the land,’ approached the gates of the land at sundown disguised as messengers. Rahab the prostitute saw them coming, and went to meet them. She bowed to the ground and said, ‘Please, gentlemen, come to my house. Wash your feet and spend the night. Then you may rise early and go on your way” (Josh. 2:1).

The climax (Josh. 2:2-7) reports the shrewdness with which Rahab defends the warriors. The Bible regularly celebrates the shrewdness with which Israel’s ancestors outwit foreign rulers. Abraham shrewdly outwits Pharaoh (Gen. 12:9—13:1) and the ruler of Gerar (Gen. 20:1-18). Isaac outwits a Philistine ruler (Gen. 26:1-11). This story casts Rahab as being as shrewd as Abraham or Isaac.

There are two episodes in the denouement (Josh. 2:8-24). One recounts the covenant between Yahweh and Rahab (Josh. 2:8-14), the other her celebration of Passover (Josh. 2:15-24). The first episode reports Rahab’s profession of faith (Deut. 25:5-9). She ratifies two basic articles of Israel’s creed: it is Yahweh who gives Israel land (Josh. 2:8-9) and it is Yahweh who sets Israel free (Josh. 2:10). Her vocabulary is almost all taken from Deuteronomy, which was the basis of Josiah’s reform (Deut. 6:21-23; 26:5-10). She also promises to help Joshua capture the land (Josh. 2:12-13). Joshua’s warriors react by granting Rahab and her household amnesty (Josh. 2:14).

In the second episode of the denouement Rahab exercises her obligations as a covenant partner of Yahweh by helping Joshua’s warriors escape (Josh. 2:15-16). They reaffirm their promise of amnesty for her household (Josh. 2:17-24). This episode uses prolepsis, which arranges events according to importance, not chronology. Rahab lets the warriors down by a rope (Josh. 2:15) before negotiating a covenant with them (Josh. 2:16-18). Chronologically, she would have negotiated with Joshua’s warriors before lowering them over the city wall.

The point of the story is to remind its audience that Rahab is not a renegade; she is the mother of a household. The household of Rahab snapped up Josiah’s label of “prostitute” and used this story to refute it (2 Kings 23:7). How can an ancestor like Sarah (Gen. 12:9—13:1), Tamar (Gen. 38:1-30), Shiprah and Puah (Exod. 1:12-21), the daughter of Levi (Exod. 2:1-10), and Miriam (Exod. 15:20-21) be a prostitute? How can a chief like Deborah (Judg. 4:1—5:31), who with Jael delivers her household from its enemies, be a prostitute?

The story warns the household of Josiah to remember that the hospitality that earned the household of Rahab honor in early Israel should not be taken away by someone whose own ancestors were its beneficiaries. The household of Rahab retains the label in introducing its ancestor Rahab, to question how a household that did not betray Joshua could betray Josiah. Without the hospitality, the military skill, and the unconditional faith of Rahab, the warriors of Joshua would have died in the gates of the land. The household of Rahab, in fact, is not a prostitute, but a covenant partner. Her household is hospitable, not hostile, to both Joshua and
Josiah. To protect the warriors of Joshua, Rahab defies the orders of the ruler of the land, tricks his soldiers, and then uses one of her household’s own flax ropes to help the warriors escape.

The Story of Rahab as Host was told to defend her household against a new Joshua, named “Josiah”, who tried to excommunicate it for continuing to worship Yahweh outside Jerusalem. The cruel irony that the household of Rahab had welcomed as strangers those whose descendants were trying to exterminate it may have led the household to question the value of hospitality as a means of survival. The story reminded the household that the same Yahweh who delivered it once from Joshua would deliver it again from Josiah. By contrasting Rahab’s gracious hospitality, outstanding military skill, and profound faith in Yahweh with Joshua’s questioning faith and bungling strategy, the storytellers certified that her household should not be exterminated but continue to enjoy all the rights and privileges of a covenant partner in early Israel.

The Story of Rahab as Host introduces the books of Joshua and Judges to emphasize that the Hebrews conquer the land by accepting hospitality from Rahab. She hears what Yahweh has done for the Hebrews, and negotiates a covenant of her own with Yahweh for land and children. The Hebrews join the inhabitants of the land in overthrowing the monarchs who oppress them. The story creates a stark contrast between the violence of a Joshua and the other chiefs, who exterminate strangers, and the hospitality of a Rahab and her household, who welcome them. The land belongs, not to the powerful like Joshua and his warriors who conquer its inhabitants, but to the powerless like Rahab and her household who welcome strangers with hospitality.

Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho (Josh. 5:13—6:27)

The Bible sets the inauguration of Joshua at Jericho. Jericho is an oasis in the Jordan River Valley some 840 feet below sea level and twenty miles north of the Dead Sea. In contrast with the Hills of Galilee, which average forty inches of rainfall a year, and with the Hills of Samaria, which average about thirty inches of rainfall a year, and with Jerusalem, which averages twenty-four inches, and with Beth-shan, which averages thirteen inches, Jericho receives only six inches of rainfall a year.

Jericho was founded on a site where two fault lines cut deep into the hill country, creating two east-west highways running between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan Valley. One route, called the Beth-horon Pass, ran through the Valley of Aijalon near Jerusalem; the other ran near Gibeah and Michmash. What draws the telling of the inauguration of Joshua to Jericho is not only its strategic location, but also its standing as a threshold separating chaos from cosmos. Jericho was the place where the world began, where cosmos was created. Therefore Jericho was the site where Joshua was inaugurated to teach the people of Yahweh to live in the land of Yahweh without cities like Jericho. Cities were the legacy of the pharaohs and the work of slaves. A thousand years after the days of Joshua, the people of Qumran still renewed their covenant with Yahweh by crossing the Jordan River and processing around Jericho’s ruins.

Generation after generation left marks at Jericho. Mesolithic pioneers occupied the site in 8000 BCE during the Natufian era. Neolithic engineers fortified Jericho with a massive wall, tower, and dry moat between 8500 and 4300 BCE. Early Bronze settlers occupied the site from
2900 to 2300 BCE, Hyksos warriors established a battle camp at Jericho fortified with a sloping glacis and mud-brick wall in 1750-1560 BCE. Hezekiah (726–697 BCE) and Simon (142–134 B.C.E.) were the last kings of Judah to rebuild it (Judg. 3:13; 2 Sam. 10:5; 1 Chron. 19:5). Despite Jericho’s long history, however, the site was uninhabited as often as inhabited. Jericho was a ghost town from 4000 to 2900 BCE, from 2300 to 1750 BCE, from 1560 to 716 BCE, and from 587 to 142 BCE. The existing ruins at Jericho and Ai, Jericho’s sister city, date from the Early Bronze period (3300–2000 BCE) or the Middle Bronze period (2000–1550 BCE). As yet, there is no archaeological evidence for a city or a destruction layer at either site after 1200 BCE (Fig. 30).

Kathleen Kenyon (1906–1978) of the British Museum was the most accomplished archaeologist to excavate Jericho (1952–1958). For her, Jericho was a strongly fortified Hyksos city during the Middle Bronze period. Like the Hebrews, the Hyksos were a Semitic people. They ruled an empire that stretched from Avaris near Cairo today to the Carmel Mountains near Haifa. Their city at Jericho was destroyed more than 250 years before Joshua, and remained abandoned until 716 BCE, when Hezekiah rebuilt it. More than one explanation has been offered to reconcile the destruction of Jericho described in the book of Joshua with the lack of solid archaeological evidence that a city existed at the site in the days of Joshua.

Perhaps the traditions describing the conquest of Jericho and Ai (Josh. 1-9) are not battle reports, but explanations of the ruins that the Hebrew found at Jericho and at Ai. Since this proposal was first suggested, anthropologists have shown that storytellers do use striking natural phenomena and human ruins familiar to their audiences to punctuate stories, but they do not tell stories just to explain natural phenomena and human ruins.

Perhaps Jericho’s Late Bronze period city may still lie beneath a section of the tell that has not yet been excavated. No excavations have been conducted at Jericho since those directed by Kathleen Kenyon, who excavated only a small portion of the site.

Perhaps the city that Joshua conquered may have been completely eroded by Syria-Palestine’s winter rains. There was a real city at the site when the Hebrew villages appeared in the area, but all trace of that city has vanished.

Perhaps the people whom Joshua conquered in the Late Bronze period were living behind Middle Bronze period walls. They did not build their own walls in the Late Bronze period, but simply recycled those from an earlier period.

Perhaps the “Jericho” in these traditions may originally have been “Bethel,” which, like Ai, was also a sister city of Jericho. There is clear evidence for Bethel’s destruction in the Late Bronze period, and storytellers may eventually have transferred the battle of Bethel to the more famous Jericho.

Perhaps Kenyon simply overlooked evidence for a city at Jericho during the Late Bronze period. There may be locally made Late Bronze pottery among Kenyon’s finds, even though there is no Late Bronze period pottery imported from Mycenae. There may also be scarab seals from the Late Bronze period among the grave goods that Kenyon recovered. Burned grain
recovered from the excavation may show that Jericho fell quickly and not after a prolonged siege. An earthquake may have created a landslide that held back the waters of the Jordan and tumbled the city’s main mud-brick wall, providing a ramp down from the top of the tell across its glacis and retaining wall. The Hebrews may have climbed up this ramp into the city set ablaze when roofs collapsed into cooking fires.

The interpretation here, however, assumes that it was the ruins of Jericho, and not a living city, that inspired the Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho. The ruins of its lofty tower and massive walls were monuments to the affluence and organization of the peoples who once lived at Jericho. Like others who came on these ruins, the Hebrews were awestruck. The ruins made the Hebrews wonder why Yahweh allowed this great city to be destroyed, and whether or not they should rebuild it.

The Hebrews had good reasons to rebuild Jericho. Rebuilding the city would be an act of stewardship. They would be repairing the land that Yahweh had willed to them. Normally, heirs were expected to take immediate possession of their testator’s estates in order to begin payment of the agreed annuity or sacrifices. Rebuilding Jericho would also allow the Hebrews to enjoy its affluence. Jericho was an economic gold mine. Obviously, the founders of Jericho knew how to make a good living in this land, and the Hebrews wanted to imitate them. The Hebrews hoped Jericho could make Israel as rich as their predecessors on the site.

The Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho reflects the idealism of early Israel. The Hebrews who built their villages in the hills above Jericho were survivors of the great slave empires of Egypt, Hatti, and Mycenae. Cities were the hallmark of these empires. While most cultures in the world of the Bible looked on cities as great accomplishments, the clan of Joshua considered cities to be monuments to slavery. Hence, the Hebrews created a village culture, not a city culture. To prevent slavery, early Israel prohibited not only cities, but monarchs, taxes, and soldiers as well. Life in early Israel would be simple, but it would be free.

Interdicts similar to the one placed on Jericho in the Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho also appear in a tradition about Babel (Gen. 11:1-90) and a tradition in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 6:10-19). To rebuild Jericho would return the Hebrews to the slavery from which Yahweh had delivered them. Cities and slavery were the antithesis of being Hebrew. The Inauguration of Joshua warns the Hebrews not to rebuild Jericho, but to leave the city in ruins, and off-limits, as a reminder that only in a land without cities can they remain free.

Crisis episode (Josh. 5:13)

The Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho (Josh. 5:13—6:27) follows the same pattern as the Inauguration of Marduk in the *Enuma Elish Stories* from Mesopotamia (Fig. 31). Just as the divine assembly of Babylon inaugurates Marduk to confront Tiamat, Yahweh inaugurates Joshua to confront Jericho. Inauguration stories identify candidates to the community and authorize their use of power. These stories defend leaders against charges of ambition by portraying them as simply following the commission of their divine patrons. Inaugurations regularly open with candidates pursuing ordinary tasks.
When the book of Joshua opens, the Hebrews are east of the Jordan River. Some are content, even proud, to remain there. They have no desire to cross the frontier into the unexplored land to the west. Yahweh interrupts this peaceful existence and inaugurates Joshua to lead the Hebrews into a new world. When the inauguration opens, Joshua is on guard duty at the perimeter of the Hebrew camp. Yahweh approaches the camp as a warrior responding to a call to arms (1 Sam. 13:2; 22:7; 24:3; 2 Sam. 6:1). The intention of the theophany is to attract the attention of a candidate and to lure the candidate into the presence of Yahweh. The armed warrior attracts the attention of Joshua, just as the burning bush attracts the attention of Moses at Mt. Horeb (Exod. 3:3). Joshua challenges the warrior to identify himself: “Are you for us, or for our enemies?” (Josh. 5:13). The warrior answers, “Neither!” (Josh. 5:14), which is a characteristic refusal of Yahweh to identify himself on demand. Only Yahweh asks questions. “At ease!” would be a better translation of Yahweh’s refusal to give the password.

The prohibition of images of Yahweh (Deut. 5:8-10) in an iconoclastic culture like ancient Israel imposes restraints on any theophany in the Bible, which technically can never be an image of Yahweh. Therefore, inaugurations regularly introduce Yahweh vaguely as a “messenger” (Exod. 3:2) or a “man from the household of our Creator” (Judg. 13:6). In the Inauguration of Abraham at Mt. Moriah (Gen. 21:33—22:19), a messenger speaks to Abraham twice (Gen. 22:10+15) before Yahweh speaks to him (Gen. 22:16). In the Inauguration of Moses at Mt. Horeb (Exod. 2:23—4:23), a messenger appears (Exod. 3:2) before Yahweh speaks (Exod. 3:6). Although the Annunciation to the Wife of Manoah (Judg. 13:1-25) never formally introduces Manoah and his wife to the “man from our Creator,” only Yahweh hears prayers (Judg. 13:9), eats sacrifices (Judg. 13:15-16) and refuses to give the candidate a name (Judg. 13:17-18). The motif of Yahweh as a warrior with a fiery sword at the boundary between the old world and the new world also appears in the Story of Adam and Eve as Farmers and Child-bearers, where Yahweh stations “the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the Tree of Life” (Gen. 3:24). Yahweh also appears as a warrior in the books of Samuel-Kings (2 Sam. 24:16-17; 2 Kings 19:35; 1 Chron. 21:16) and in a Trial of David (2 Sam. 24:16-17). The warrior who confronts David is armed only with a raised hand, but as in the Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho, the target of this warrior’s commission is a city. Yahweh talks with David about the city of Jerusalem, and with Joshua about the city of Jericho.

What takes place at this threshold will determine the future of Israel. Jericho is a sacred center and Yahweh guards its threshold with a fiery sword. Joshua must use competence and courage to deal with the guardian. Once across the threshold, the candidate is endowed with the wisdom of the sacred center by this guardian. To seize this wisdom, the candidate must challenge the guardian. Only by crossing the established boundaries, only by provoking the guardian’s destructive power, can the candidate obtain the guardian’s constructive power, which will allow the Hebrews to pass over into a new world. To cross the threshold, candidates must develop the discipline to deny the senses that limit them to the known world and acquire a sense of the unknown new world. Armed with the confidence of this new sense, candidates confront the guardian without fear and lead their households forward. The Labor of Moses and Zipporah against Yahweh (Exod. 4:24-26) and the Labor of Jacob against Yahweh (Gen. 32:23-33) are parallel stories told about ancestors crossing a frontier to undertake a divine mission.

Climax episode (Josh. 5:14)
In the standard inauguration stories, Yahweh greets candidates formally by calling their name twice: “Moses! Moses!” (Exod. 3:4). Once addressed, candidates realize they are in the presence of Yahweh. Instead of calling Joshua by name, however, Yahweh addresses Joshua as his commander-in-chief: “At ease, I am Yahweh, commander of the divine warriors” (Josh. 5:14).

Joshua, like candidates in other inauguration stories, prostrates himself. His posture is a demurral that demonstrates his lack of ambition and argues that he will take possession of Jericho only in obedience and not in a selfish quest for power. With both physical and verbal demurrals candidates promise to serve the community, not dominate it. Candidates in inauguration traditions are reluctant messengers.

Yahweh often responds to the demurrals of candidates with the promise: “I am with you. This promise appears at both the beginning of the Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho when the warrior says to Joshua: “as commander of the army of Yahweh I have now come” (Josh. 5:14), and at the end when the story confirms that “Yahweh was with Joshua” (Josh. 6:27).

Yahweh often stays the transfer of a candidate from the human plane to the divine plane with the words “Fear not!” The delay allows candidates to carry out a divine mission. Here Yahweh delays Joshua’s transfer by teaching him the protocol for an audience with his divine patron. He tells Joshua to remove his sandals, which will prevent the holiness of Yahweh from transfiguring him into a risk for the Hebrews when he returns to the camp.

**Denouement episode** (Josh. 6:1-27)

Joshua is now prepared to receive his divine commission. Standard commissions use a command (Exod. 3:8-10), a decalogue (Deut. 5:6-21), or a covenant. This commission, however, is a creation story like the Enuma Elish Stories that developed in Mesopotamia, and the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth in the book of Genesis (Gen. 1:1-2:4). “When on high...” are the opening words of the Enuma Elish Stories (Enuma 1:1), and a good example of the standard opening words for creation stories. Likewise, “When Joshua appeared before Jericho...” better translates the opening words of this inauguration. When the messenger of Yahweh appears, a radical change is imminent (Gen. 39:5, Exod. 12:13; 1 Sam. 5:9; 7:13; 12:15).

**Sterility affidavits** are the standard crisis episodes in creation stories. They certify that when the creator begins to create, there is nothing but chaos. The sterility affidavit of the creation story: “all who went out of the gate of his city” (Gen. 34:24) and “all who went in at the gate of his city” (Gen. 23:8-10) identify the two most important groups of men. As early as the culture of Sumer, cities were governed by warriors and elders. In the Stories of Gilgamesh, both the elders and the warriors commission him to declare war on Kish. Here in the inauguration of Joshua, there are no warriors to protect Jericho from its enemies, and there are no elders to resolve disputes among its households. The city is as lifeless as the chaos before which Yahweh stands in the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth.
The climax episode in the creation story is a cosmogony. Yahweh directs Joshua to celebrate the end of the old world of Jericho and the beginning of the new world of Israel. This liturgy contains a series of rubrics describing what is to be done and what is to be said. For six days, the Hebrews are to walk in procession around Jericho once a day. On the seventh day, they are to process around the city seven times. These seven days of processions parallel the seven days of creation in the Stories of the Heavens and the Earth. This liturgy, however, does not draw cosmos from chaos, but returns cosmos to chaos. It is a reversed ritual that inverts the creative process.

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**Charles Warren** (1867–1868) dug three thirty-foot shafts into the tell and determined that the 70 ft. high, 10 acre mound (1200 N-S x 600 E-W ft.) was artificial, not natural.

**E. Sellin and C. Watziner** (1907–1909, 1911) mapped the Middle Bronze period (1600 BCE) retaining wall, 15 ft. high, at the base of the tell.

Using a pottery chronology now considered faulty, **John Gartstang** (1930–1936) dated mud-brick wall and city at stratum iv to the Late Bronze period and their destruction to Joshua (1400–1380 BCE).

**Kathleen Kenyon** (1952–1958), whose reports were finally published in 1981–1983, dug three trenches on N, W, and S sides of the tell, dated the tower (25 ft. diam., 25 ft. high) to Neolithic period (7000 BCE), mud-brick wall (6.5 ft. wide, 12 ft. high) and 40 degree glacis to the Early Bronze period, but mud-brick wall and city at stratum iv to the Middle Bronze period (1350 BCE) because there was no Mycenaean pottery associated with either.

**Bryant G. Wood** (“Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence,” *BAR* Rev 16 [Mar/Apr 90]: 44-57) did not excavate Jericho, but restudied Kenyon’s records, and argues that:

1) 20 strata, 3 major destructions, 12 minor destructions cannot be assigned to only 100 years (1650–1550 BCE);
2) there is Late Bronze period local pottery in Garstang’s and Kenyon’s finds;
3) Jericho is not on a trade route, hence would not import Late Bronze period - Mycenaean pottery like Megiddo and Gezer;
4) Kenyon excavated an ordinary neighborhood where imported Mycenaean pottery would not occur;
5) Kenyon excavated only two 26 ft. x 26 ft. squares, which provides too little data to be conclusive;
6) Hyksos retreating from Egypt would not have destroyed Jericho, which was their own city;
7) Egyptians did not pursue Hyksos north of Sharuhen in the Negeb;
8) Egyptians always attacked before harvest, and 6 bushels of wheat recovered indicate city fell after harvest;
9) continuous scarab record in tombs from the Middle Bronze period through the Late Bronze period (1800–1400 BCE) indicates a Late Bronze period city did exist

...in order to conclude that:

1) a landslide caused by a Late Bronze period (1400 BCE!) earthquake blocked Jordan;
2) an earthquake collapsed the Late Bronze period mud-brick wall, which tumbled across retaining wall;
3) the Hebrews used rubble as a ladder to enter the city;
4) spontaneous fires caused by collapsing buildings destroyed the city.

Although some words in the liturgy do carry military connotations, they also carry liturgical connotations. For example, the same Hebrew word can mean “the army” or “the people of Yahweh” (Josh. 6:8). Likewise, to carry the ark of the covenant was as much an act of war as an act of worship. In battle the ark was a rallying point for warriors separated from their detachments. In worship the ark was the pedestal of Yahweh toward which the congregation directed its attention.

The walls of Jericho are the divine patron of the city. They prostrate themselves, which signals that the old world of Jericho has come to an end, and acknowledges that Yahweh is the new divine patron of this land (Josh. 6:20). The walls are to remain prostrate and the city is placed under interdict to remind the Hebrews that the old world of monarchs and taxes and soldiers and cities and slaves has ended. The Hebrews draw a circle as they dance with the ark around the ruin, creating a forbidden zone where only

*inauguration story crisis* (Josh. 5:13)

When Joshua appeared at Jericho, a warrior suddenly approached him with his sword drawn. Joshua challenged the stranger: “Friend or foe?”

*inauguration story climax* (Josh. 5:14)

The warrior answered: “At ease! I am Yahweh, commander of the divine warriors. I am with you.” Joshua fell to his knees, touching his forehead to the ground. “Your word is my command!” Yahweh Sabaoth ordered Joshua: “Take off your sandals. You are standing on holy ground” So Joshua removed his sandals.

*inauguration story denouement: a creation story* (Josh. 6:1-27)
Jericho was unable to muster soldiers or assemble elders before the Israelites. Then Yahweh said to Joshua, “I have delivered Jericho with its ruler and all its warriors to you. Your warriors should circle the city in procession once a day for six consecutive days. Seven priests should walk in procession with their trumpets in front of the Ark of Yahweh. On the seventh day, walk in processions around the city seven times. Order the priests to blow their trumpets and the warriors to shout their battle cry: ‘Yahweh is Lord!’ In response, the walls of the city will prostrate before the procession of warriors walking one behind the other.”

So Joshua ben Nun, ordered the priests to shoulder the Ark, and assigned seven priests with trumpets to lead it out of the camp. He ordered the warriors to circle the city in procession in front of the Ark, and they carried out Joshua’s orders. Seven priests blowing their trumpets led the Ark of Yahweh out of the camp with warriors walking both in front of the ark and behind it. Although the priests blew their trumpets continuously, Joshua had ordered the warriors not to shout their battle cry until he gave the word.

On the first day, the Ark circled the city only once before returning to camp for the night. At dawn, Joshua ordered the priests to shoulder the Ark, and assigned seven priests blowing their trumpets continuously to lead it out of the camp with warriors walking both in front of the Ark and behind it.

On the second day, they circled the city only once before returning to camp for the night.

On six consecutive days, they repeated the ritual.

At dawn on the seventh day, they walked in procession around the city, in the same order, a total of seven times. It was only on the seventh day that they circled the city seven times. On the seventh time, when the priests had blown their trumpets, Joshua gave the word to the warriors: “Shout: ‘Yahweh has delivered the city into our hands!’” Sacrifice the city and everything in it to Yahweh. Spare only the household of Rahab the prostitute because she spared our warriors. Bring nothing from the sacrifice back to the camp. Plunder taken from a sacrifice contaminates everything it touches. Deposit the silver, gold, and bronze and iron from the sacrifice directly into the Treasury of Yahweh.”

The warriors shouted their battle cry as soon as the priests blew their trumpets.

The walls of the city prostrated before the procession of warriors walking one behind the other.

The warriors sacrificed the entire city to Yahweh, men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and asses.

Joshua ordered the warriors who had scouted the land: “Deliver the household of Rahab the prostitute as you swore to her you would do!” The warriors who had scouted the land delivered Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and their slaves, and brought them to the perimeter of the camp. They offered the city as a sacrifice and deposited all the silver, gold, bronze, and iron directly into the treasury of Yahweh. Nonetheless, they spared the household of Rahab the prostitute, who are still Israelites to this day, because she spared the warriors Joshua sent to scout.
Jericho. Joshua placed the city under interdict: “Cursed be the ruler who rebuilds this city, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates.” Yahweh was with Joshua, he was honored throughout the land.
Chapter 21

Making Love and Making Meals
The Song of Solomon

What do erotic artifacts contribute to the understanding of the Song of Solomon?

The Song of Solomon belongs to the genre erotica. Cultures develop erotic traditions to teach men and women how to make love, and to motivate them to make love. Lovemaking is unique to its culture of origin. Seldom are the patterns of behavior established by one culture transferable to another. Therefore, erotica, like the Song of Solomon and the love songs of Egypt, teaches adults in the expected patterns of sexual behavior.

Sexual behavior is also among the most fragile activities in any culture. Sexual behavior can be interrupted by any number of physical, emotional, or psychological factors. Erotica motivates adults to engage in sexual activity, or to return to regular sexual activity after it has been interrupted.

Erotica is not pornography. Erotic traditions focus on healthy and balanced physical relationships. Pornography promotes violence against one sexual partner by the other. Pornography promotes physical abuse, not sexual relationships. Erotica develops from the boy-talk and girl-talk that take place in every culture. When groups of boys and girls or men and women get together, they inevitably talk about the attributes of the opposite sex. The daughters of Jerusalem who appear in the Song of Solomon are the women of the household with whom the singer speaks.

Sacred Marriage (hieros gamos)

Brooklyn Museum
305-30 B.C.E. (Ptolemaic Period)
Limestone
6.5x6 11/16x3.75 inches

Egyptians told and retold the Story of Isis and Osiris, which the Greeks adopted when they conquered Egypt in 333 B.C.E. The Brooklyn Museum preserves a limestone carving...
of the story. Artistically, the piece is extraordinary. Unlike traditional Egyptian art that portrays a single figure, this is a statue of a group. Unlike traditional Egyptian art that is meant to be viewed from a single angle, this statue can be viewed from any angle.

A priest with his hair combed to the side like the heir of a household plays the role of Osiris. He is having intercourse with Isis. As in traditional Egyptian art, his skin is red and her skin is white.

During their intercourse, other priests sacrifice an oryx. The oryx (*oryx leucoryx*) is an African antelope. It has long, straight or slightly curved horns and a hump above the shoulders.

The oryx was sacred to Satet, divine patron of the bow made from its horn. Satet appears as a woman wearing the white crown of southern Egypt and a pair of long antelope horns. She was the wife of Khnum, the divine potter, and joined Isis, to restore the fertility of Egypt’s farmland during time of the Nile flood. Satet also joined Hathor, the godmother, to bless human reproduction. Her main temple was on Abu Island at Aswan.

On the walls of the Birthing Room at Luxor, Satet watches Khnum, the divine potter, shape Amenophis III (1391-1353 B.C.E.) and his ka soul. She holds the ankh ready to bring the models to life. Elsewhere on the wall, Amenophis’ ka soul wearing the ka crown with two arms raised, waits for Amenophis to be born. Two divine midwives present both infants to Amun. The newborns are then nursed by divine nurses portrayed as cows, and blessed with life and prosperity by Heka and Hapy. (Lamy 1981: 25-26) The drawings are a creation story describing the virgin birth of Amenophis, and identifying him as the son of God.
A Hittite vase was recovered from Inandik, Turkey showing a similar celebration of sacred marriage during a banquet (Sasson, ed. 1995 iv: 2522). One pair of full-clothed dancers on the vases are having intercourse with the man penetrating the woman from behind (*coitus a tergo*).

**Erotic Hunting**

**British Museum EA 37977**  
1550-1070 B.C.E.  
83 cm high; 98 cm wide  
Tomb of Nebamun, Thebes

Carvings and paintings of hunting with a throwing stick or boomerang can be metaphors for the sexual roles of woman and man. (Sasson, ed. 1995 iv: 2522). For example, eleven wall paintings in the British Museum from the tomb of Nebamun are among the most skillfully executed from ancient Egypt. Inscriptions on the paintings introduce Nebamun as a sanctuary scribe who records the offerings that households make to their divine patrons. The paintings show Nebamun and his household at work and play.

Here, Nebamun stands on a small boat with his wife, Hatshepsut, behind him and his son below. He is about to throw a stick into flock birds flushed from a papyrus thicket. The hieroglyphs below his raised arm describe Nebamun as "taking recreation and seeing what is good in the place of eternity" which may refer to having intercourse with Hatshepsut to conceive their son, not just going hunting with her.

**Erotic Geese and Ducks**

Carvings and paintings of ducks or geese can be metaphors for the sexual roles of woman and man. (Sasson, ed. 1995 iv: 2522).

**Egyptian Museum, Cairo**  
Geese from Tomb of Itat (2575-2465 B.C.E.)  
Tempera on Plaster  
5 ft 8 in wide  
Medum
Erotic Swimmers

Some two dozen spoons are carved with Nut, divine patron of the sky, as a nude girl swimming girl with Geb, divine patron of the earth, as a large waterfowl resting comfortably on top of her upturned arms (Kosloff and Bryan 1992: 347-348). Only two species of ducks have comparable markings: the bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*) in South Asia and the white faced tree duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*) in Ethiopia. [http://www.earthlife.net/birds/anseriformes.html](http://www.earthlife.net/birds/anseriformes.html)

![Musee du Louvre, E 218 N 1725b](image)

**Musee du Louvre, E 218 N 1725b**

boxwood, ebony, ivory

6 cm high, 7.5 cm wide, 29.3 cm long

Nut is a member of the ennead, Egypt’s community of the nine original divine patrons. She is the source of everything humans eat. Sometimes, Nut marries Re, the divine patron of the sun, to produce the crops of Egypt; sometimes she marries Geb, the divine patron of the earth.

Standard portraits of Nut show her as a woman with the *ankh*, the hieroglyph for life, and the *wadj*, a papyrus stalk characteristic of female members of the divine assembly. She carries a *nu* vase on her head, representing her womb where the seeds of all the crops of Egypt gestate.

Nut she is also depicted as a naked woman, her body studded with stars, arched like the heavens over Geb the earth. Here, Nut arches over Geb as usual, but has sun discs instead of on her womb. Nut swallows the sun in the evening and gives birth to it again in the morning. During the day the sun travels from her birth canal and goes to her mouth. On the ground, Geb is portrayed in an unusual somersault position. (Lamy 1981: 20-21)
“Terracotta” is an art medium which is shaped and dried, but not baked.

Erotic Sleepers

Small terracotta statues of women from the Ubaid culture in southern Mesopotamia are strikingly slim in contrast to those from the north. A Mother and Child statue, for example, portrays a woman nursing her newborn. Necklaces and belts are painted around their necks and waists. The mother also has a painted bracelet on her wrist. Her shoulders and nipples are also painted. The infant’s head is elongated and the eyes are prominent.

Clay statues of naked women appear have been recovered in Mesopotamia from the Neolithic period (10,000-4,000 B.C.E. to the Persian period (550-330 B.C.E.). These statues have exaggerated female reproductive organs: Schematic stone figure, with virtually no arms or legs, and a small head, but exaggerated sexual organs.
Halaf Godmother
British Museum
5000 B.C.E.
Terracotta
Chagar Bazar

Terracotta statues of the Godmother like one recovered from Chagar Bazar were made during the Halaf period. The women portrayed have large breasts and hips to distinguish them as childbearers. The painted decorations on their bodies may represent tattoos, jewelry or clothing.

Venus of Beersheba
Israel Museum IDAM 58-586
4300-3300 B.C.E.
Ivory
4 ¾ in, high
Beer Safad (Israel)

The Beersheba Culture (Beer Safad) produced exquisite ivory pieces in its subterranean workshops that protected people from the intense heat and sand storms in the valley. Archaeologists recovered a complete tusk in the ivory workshop as well as a stone table. Among the tools in the shop was a copper drill bit set into a bone handle. (Treasures of the Holy Land: ancient art from the Israel Museum, 1986: 57-86)

The style of the Beersheba ivories is unique. The Venus of Beersheba, for example, places her hands on her abdomen. Her small breasts and distended uterus are well defined. Her nipples and disproportionately large and deep navel were originally inlaid. Her pubic triangle is
also disproportionately large and framed by three deep cuts. The twenty-eight shallow holes drilled into the triangle were filled with bitumen.

Chalcolithic worship is still a mystery, and the significance of the large number of statues recovered by archaeologists is still not decoded. Nonetheless, a tour burlesque in the Song of Solomon (Song 7:1-6) celebrates many of the same physical attributes of the female body.

How graceful are your feet in sandals, my royal lady!

Your rounded thighs are like jewels,
   -- the work of a master hand.
Your naval is a rounded bowl,
   -- full of wine and water.
Your belly is a heap of wheat,
   -- circled with lilies.
Your breasts are like two fawns,
   -- twins of a gazelle.

Your neck is like an ivory tower.

Your eyes are pools in Heshbon,
   -- at the Deep Water Gate.
Your nose is like the Tower of Lebanon,
   -- overlooking Damascus.

Your head crowns you like Carmel,

Your flowing locks are like purple;
   -- a king is held captive in its braids. (Song 7:1-6)

The tour-burlesque is an erotic catalog for the parts of the human body, which it describes, one feature at a time. At each stop on the tour, one lover describes a part of the other’s anatomy using erotic analogies. Like the other genres in the Song of Solomon, the tour-burlesque appeals to one or more of the sense of the audience. There are at least nine tours-burlesque in the Song of Solomon (Song 1:5-6; 9-11; 3:6-11; 45:1-5, 10-11, 5:10-16; 6:4-7; 7:1-6, 7-10).

The Lover of the Royal Woman (Song 7:1-6) begins his tour burlesque at her feet, which he describes as the feet of dancers. She glides in her sandals as she walks. The image is visual.

Sandals
Denver Museum of Nature and Science
Leather
Egypt

The thighs of the Royal Woman are sculptured as if they had been crafted by a perfectly jeweler.
The lover sees the navel of the Royal Woman like the statue of the Venus of Beersheba as a drinking bowl full of wine.

In the world of the Bible, wine was drunk from a bowl, not from a stemmed glass. Drinking bowls (Ugaritic, Phoenician, Hebrew: *kos*) were made of pottery, bronze, silver, or gold. (Sasson, ed. 1995 i: 638) They were held with two hands allowing drinkers to enjoy both the deep, red color of the vine, and its bouquet. The image in the tour, therefore, appeals to both sight and smell, and may also reflect the way the lover of the Royal Woman cradled her belly in his hands, much the way the Venus of Beersheba cradles her abdomen with her own hands.

The strong wine was drawn out of a large storage jar with a dipper. (Sasson, ed. 1995 i: 638) Then it was poured into a tripod-based krater or a krater resting on a wooden stand and diluted with water. The Wise Woman invites her students to drink the wine she has mixed: “Come eat my bread, and rink the wine that I have mixed.” (Prov 9:5) Learning and love-making are both passionate experiences involving all the senses.

The lover describes the abdomen of the Royal Woman as a “heap of wheat”. She is pregnant, or will become pregnant. Her uterus is full, not flat. The wheat is an image of both the semen that her lover will plant in her womb, and the crops that will grow in the soil womb of Mother Earth.

In the world of the Bible, life is the ability to have a child and to have a harvest. Abraham and Sarah Negotiate with Yahweh for land and children (Gen 11:27—12:8).

“All I will make you a great nation, I will bless you. I will make your name great, I will make you a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse those who curse you. All the earth shall find blessing you.” (Gen 12:1-6)
The Story of Ruth as a Persevering Widow (Ruth 3:1-18) also parallels a heap of grain with a distended uterus. Boaz accepts his responsibility as the legal guardian of the household of Elimelech by sending Ruth home with his grain. The grain, which is his return of the land to the household of Elimelech, will be matched soon by the semen, which will be his return of the children to the household. The association between the seed that will give birth to a child and the seed that will produce a harvest is further strengthened when Boaz pours barley into Ruth’s apron. She pulls the apron full of grain to her body, making her look like a woman who is heavily pregnant. (Benjamin 2003:172)

Small statues of the female body portrayed naturally, but with their head rendered abstractly, were sculpted from terracotta and painted at Arpachiyah (Northern Iraq) and throughout the world of the Bible. Some have a small hole in the top so that the statue can be worn as a necklace. (Reade 1991:22)

The abstract heads are cone shaped, probably representing the crown identifying the woman as the Godmother, who at the beginning of the Bronze Age (3300 B.C.E.) was called “Isthar”.

Tammuz (Sumerian: Dumuzi) and Ishtar (Sumerian: Inanna) were lovers separated by death, but reunited by love. Tammuz descends into the land of the dead, and Ishtar faithfully pursues and rescues him. The stories tell not only of two lovers, but also of the death of the earth during the long dry season, and its rebirth at the beginning of the wet season during the celebration of the akitu New Year. Like the last drops of moisture which the parched soil sucked deep into the earth, Tammuz is drawn by stages into the land of the dead. Like the rain which moistens the soil at the end of the dry season so that farmers can plow and plant, the tears of Ishtar in the land of the dead bring Tammuz back to life. She raises him from the dead like the first leaves of the crops that sprout through the soil under a farmer's care at the beginning of the growing season. (Matthews and Benjamin 1997: 305-311)

Erotic cylinder seals

Erotic plaques
Erotic plaques have been recovered only in Mesopotamia. Some are molded in clay (1894-1595 B.C.E.), others in lead (1363-1076 B.C.E.).

On the clay plaques a man and woman have intercourse in two different positions. In one the couple is standing and facing one another. The woman bends one leg at the knee. In the other the man performs rear entry intercourse while the woman bends over and drinks beer through a straw from a jar. The lovers on a terracotta plaque recovered in Babylon may represent the private lives of ordinary people or a sacred couple celebrating the ritual marriage of the ruler and the cultures divine patron. (Reade 1991: 82)

Again erotic art parallels the semen of the lover that produces a child, and the seed of the farmer that produces the beer. Land and children are the blessing which demonstrate that life exists.
Archaeology and the Near East

Archaeology did not emerge as a discrete discipline until the turn of the last century. The central notion from which archaeology developed is quite straightforward: humankind has left material traces of its history in and on the earth. The scholarly discipline of archaeology (from Greek words archn and logos meaning discourse about the past, or about origins) is one means of investigating that history. Whereas adventurers traveled to far-off places to seek novel experiences and exotica, archaeologists, on the other hand, surveyed and excavated at home and abroad in order to uncover the physical remains of history.

http://www.umich.edu/~kelseydb/Exhibits/DangerousArchaeology/PartOne.html

Earth Life

Discussion of the bar-headed goose (anser indicus) and the white faced tree duck (dendrocygna viduata).
http://www.earthlife.net/birds/anseriformes.html

Caroline Seawright, “Ancient Egyptian Sexuality”
http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/sexuality.html

Herodotus, “Ritual Prostitution”
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Treasures of the Holy Land: ancient art from the Israel Museum


Chapter 22

Pharoahs Slept Here: The Giza Plain

William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) began his career in archaeology as a young man. Petrie's father was a surveyor who taught him how to use the most advanced equipment of the time. This early training instilled in Petrie a respect for measurement and accuracy which would inform and influence his work in archaeology.

Petrie excavated many important sites in Egypt: Hawara, Meydum, Abydos, Amarna, Ballas, Naqada, Gerza and Tarkhan. In 1892, Petrie became the first Edwards Professor of Egyptian Archaeology and Philology at University College, London.

Petrie pioneered three important changes in archaeology. First, he carefully recorded the physical dispersal of objects in a site, rather than simply digging for treasure. Second, Petrie considered small objects, like pottery, to be more useful than individual, spectacular objects in interpreting a site. Using different styles of pottery, he developed a chronology for dating sites. Third, Petrie discovered the earliest form of the 'Proto-Sinaitic' alphabet, which was a major contribution to the study of the origins of writing in the ancient Near East.

The measurement of ancient monuments always fascinated Petrie and in the early 1880's, he went to Egypt to survey the pyramid of Khufu on the Giza Plain. Petrie wanted to test the theory that the measurements of the pyramids were a code containing profound truths about the history and destiny of the human race.

The pyramids on the Giza Plain are a mathematical masterpiece, which over time has given rise to a blizzard of theories as to just what formulas were used to construct them. Dominant theories argue that the pyramids were constructed one at a time; that they were oriented to certain constellations of stars in Egypt’s night sky; and that site of each pyramid was determined by using triangles. Petrie himself used triangulation to survey the Giza plain.

Among the alternative theories for understanding the Giza Plain are those which argue that the entire plan for all three pyramids was designed at one time; that the pyramids were oriented to the sun; and that the Egyptians used squares rather than triangles to lay out the sites.
Only three ninety-degree angles would be necessary to lay out the pyramids on the Giza Plain. Point zero for the layout of pyramids on the Giza Plain may be a curious dry well or shaft dug into the ground near the Pyramid of Khufu. The pyramid of Khefren is set on an east-west axis drawn from the shaft, and the pyramids of Khufu and Menkaure are ninety degrees off the axis. Exactly at noon, the sun lights the shaft without casting any shadows on its side walls. The walls, therefore, become plumb lines against which to level the pyramids vertically as well as horizontally. Snatching the sun from the sky exactly at noon is a motive which also appears in the Stories of Elijah.

A Hymn to Ptah

A Hymn to Ra

The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (Gen 1:1—2:4)

Yahweh Delivers Gibeon from Westerners (Josh 10:1-43)

“Amorite” was the word used in Mesopotamia for all of the people who lived “west” of the Euphrates River. Here the word refers to all the peoples of Syria-Palestine. Gibeon is attacked from all four points of the compass, plus one. The city is surrounded. http://servus.christusrex.org/www1/ofm/mad/discussion/050discuss.html

Yahweh “…threw them into panic, …chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon …struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah”. (Josh 10:10) Yahweh, not Joshua delivers Gibeon. http://www.ourfatherlutheran.net/biblehomelands/palestine/gibeon.htm

Yahweh not only orders the hail to attack the Westerners, but the sun and the moon as well. Yahweh orders the sun and the moon to cut off the Westerners from their two escape routes: the ascent of Beth-horon or Aijalon and the highway to Azekah and Makkedah. Yahweh similarly mobilizes the sun, the rain, the sun and the moon in the Book of Habakkuk (Hab 3:11) and the Book of Judges (Judg 5:20). http://www.ancientsandals.com/pictures/aijalon.htm

Israel watched and prayed…

“Oh Yahweh, order the Sun to cut off Gibeon on the east;
Order the Moon to cut off the Aijalon Valley on the west.
Let the Sun take its place,
And the Moon stand firm!”

…while Yahweh defeated its enemies. 207

The sun and the moon delayed the Westerners escape long enough for the divine warriors to execute the sentence of the divine assembly on the enemies of Gibeon. 208
In Assyrian tradition it is a sign of victory when the sun and the moon appear together in the sky on the day of battle. The Hebrews pray that Yahweh will order the sun and the moon to prevent their enemies from escaping.

**Elijah Divines Rain on the Carmel Mountains (1 Kgs 18:1-2+17-39)**

On the Carmel Mountains Elijah retells a story of creation both in words and in pantomime. Just as the royal prophets mime their prayer in dance (1 Kgs 18:26) Elijah mimes his story with two symbolic acts. He begins by rebuilding the altar as the primeval mountain representing the dry land. Then, he digs a great circular reservoir that will hold the primeval sea, just like the huge round cauldron called “the sea” (2 Kgs 16:17) “the bronze sea” (2 Kgs 25:13) or “the molten sea” (1 Kgs 7:24) outside the temple. The dirt that Elijah piles along the edges of his trench creates the great dikes or horizons that will hold in the sea.

There are two kinds of water in creation stories. The seas and great rivers threaten the cosmos (Gen 1:1, 2:6) Springs and rains sustain it (Ezek 31, 37; Ps 36:8–9) Elijah floods his model of the cosmos with the waters of the chaos.

Now, Elijah tells a creation story. The Bible no longer preserves the story but only the prayer with which he draws it to a close precisely at noon (1 Kgs 18:36) At that moment Yahweh strikes the waters of chaos with lightning. The waters recede and the dry land of the altar emerges. A new world has been created. Israel is free once again. Elijah sets the stage and tells the story that Yahweh acts out.

Elijah’s pantomime and story were easily understood by the people gathered on the Carmel Mountains. A parallel appears on a limestone stela from Ugarit cut after 2000 B.C.E. On the stela a divine patron stands poised with a spear of lightning over the sea. Two other parallels from Ugarit also portray divine patrons wielding lightning bolts to drive off the waters of chaos and bring on the life-giving rain. Elijah celebrates Yahweh as a divine warrior who conquers the sea of chaos and is then enthroned as creator of the cosmos. (Ps 29:1–11)

Elijah’s altar rises from the waters of chaos as the pyramids on the Giza Plain rise from the waters of the Nile. The altar and the pyramids, like the first mounds of silt that appear as the waters of the Nile begin to recede, are a promise of life. Here in this rich alluvial soil the first stalks of the coming grain harvest will appear. The land has been reborn. The drought is over. A new world has been created.

From Egypt, the Hebrews learned slavery. Slave economies were the norm in the world of the Bible. Slavery was the engine of credit which allowed households to borrow to plant their fields, and breed their herds. Slavery was the key to a surplus economy which produced more than households could consume – a surplus which could be traded for luxury goods.

Egypt was the land which rode the sun, and floated on the water. The Nile was a giant conveyor belt which watered the land of the living, and took the dead into the after life. The sun
crossed the sky in the day, and passed under the earth at night. In the Old Kingdom pharaohs sought to catch a ride on the sun at the peak of the day. In the New Kingdom pharaohs buried their dead into the earth to board the sun as it sailed beneath the earth.

Egyptians labored to irrigate a parched and barren desert and to build great cities like Pithom and Ramses. The plagues of the Hebrews deconstructed the artificial world which Egypt created. Yahweh gave the Hebrews a land flowing with milk and honey watered by living water, not irrigation water (Deut). Yahweh gave the Hebrews a land filled with cities, and fed and protected them without rulers, slaves, taxes, soldiers and cities (Josh 5-6).

Egyptians lived in the House of Slaves. Hebrews were born free (Death of the First Born of Israel).

Egyptians struggled to catch the sun. The sun stopped to pick up Elijah. Elijah rode in a chariot of the sun. It stopped for him. He did not have to board.

Egyptians rose at dawn to pull the sun from the darkness of the night into the light of day. (Abu Simbel) Yahweh held the sun in the sky so that the Hebrews could destroy their enemies, Amalekites. Yahweh created the Sun and the Moon to “govern” the day and the night for the Hebrews. (Gen 1:1—2:4) The named enemies of Israel were the nine bows of Egypt. The sun was a rest which held up the head of Egypt. Moses was a midwife who held up the head of the sun.

Pharaoh was the physical father of all Egypt, sired every man and woman in the land. Yet Hebrews like slave mothers, midwives and the mother of Moses gave birth even under a sentence of death.

Egypt made the water of the Nile flow. Yahweh made the water of the Jordan stop so that the Hebrews could cross. (Josh; Q)

Egypt lived in the land of the dead. Hebrews lived in the land of the living.

But in the end, Hebrews like David and Solomon built and state like Egypt. Hebrews walked like Egyptians, talked like Egyptians, dressed like Egyptians, buried their dead like Egyptians, wore their hair like Egyptians, and Solomon married an Egyptian. The slaves of Pharaoh became slave owners like Pharaoh.
Links

The Open Cheops Committee (http://www.opencheops.org/page9.htm) is an advocacy group challenging dominant interpretations of the pyramids on the Giza Plain.

The Petrie Museum (http://www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk/museum/petrie.html) has an inspiring collection of Egyptian and Sudanese archaeology. The museum is attached to the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

An Internet Resource for Studying the Bible (http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/arch_meso.html) According to Webmaster: Robert I. Bradshaw, B.Sc., C.D.R.S., “The inspiration for this site grew out of the interest generated by my first site, “Creationism and the Early Church Home Page”, which indicated that there is a demand for detailed and well-written articles on biblical subjects on the Internet.
Chapter 23

The Nile Valley

Medinet Habu

The ancient Egyptian name for Medinet Habu, in Arabic the "City of Habu" was Djamet, meaning "males and mothers." Its holy ground was believed to be where the Ogdoad, the four pairs of first primeval gods, were buried. (http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/habu.htm)

Medinet Habu was both a temple and a complex of temples dating from the New Kingdom. It adjoins the cultivation at the southern end of the Theban necropolis, opposite southern Luxor. The area was one of the earliest places within the Theban region to be associated with the worship of Amun. Hatshepsut and Tutmosis III built a small temple to Amun on the site of an earlier structure. Next to their temple, Ramesses III built his mortuary temple, Medinet Habu’s most conspicuous standing monument.

Ramesses III then enclosed both structures within a massive mud-brick enclosure that included storehouses, workshops, administrative offices, and residences of priests and officials. On the grounds of the entire temple complex, however, are numerous other structures besides the small temple. There are the memorial chapels of the Divine Adoratrices of Amun. Less well preserved is the memorial temple of King Horemheb, which he usurped from his predecessor Ay, that stands on the north side of the Ramesses III enclosure. To its east are a number of tomb chapels made for high officials of the later new Kingdom.

The main temple is the great memorial temple of Ramesses III, the best preserved of all mortuary temples of Thebes. It is called the Mansion of Millions of Years of User-Maat-Re Meriamun, the throne name of Ramesses III, "United with Eternity in the Possession of Amun in Western Thebes." It contains more than 75,350 sq ft of decorated surfaces across its walls.

The temple precinct measures about 700 feet by 1000 feet and was entered
by two stone gates in the mud-brick enclosure wall on both the eastern and western sides. The western gate was destroyed when the temple was besieged during conflict in the reign of Ramesses XI. The eastern entrance was fronted by a quay, at which the boats that came in via the canals could moor. The processional way led first between two porters’ lodges that were set into a low stone rampart, built in front of the main enclosure wall, and then into the precinct.

The rampart itself was a large gateway of distinctive design modeled after a western Asiatic migdol or fortress. Fronted by guard-houses, the gateway sides are decorated with images of the king trampling enemies of Egypt, and sculpted figures of the monarch standing atop the heads of captives project from the walls. A large relief representation of the god Ptah was here, having the power to transmit the prayers of those unable to enter the temple to the great god Amun within.

The upper rooms of the gate-house functioned as a kind of royal retreat or harem, its walls graced with representations of the king relaxing with young women. Perhaps it was here that the attempted assassination of Ramesses III took place.

The temple itself is a slightly smaller copy of the Ramesseum built by Ramesses II. Its massive outer pylons are the most imposing of any temple in Egypt, are decorated with colossal images the king destroying captured enemies before the gods. The temple’s outer walls also depict important battle and victory scenes over the Libyans and Sea Peoples. These scenes are continued into first court.
On the northern side of this court were large statues of the king as Osiris, and on the south a
columned portico with the window of appearances in which the king stood or sat during formal
ceremonies and festivities. The large statues of the second court were destroyed in the early
Christian era when the area was converted into a church. Relief scenes here still in good
condition depict rituals connected with the god Min, and on the rear wall of the portico, a
procession of the king’s numerous sons and daughters.

The second court is devoted to scenes of religious processions, notably those of Min and Sokar.
Despite the generally good state of preservation of the temple, the Hypostyle Hall has suffered
greatly, the columns being reduced to a small fraction of their original height. However, in the
southwest corner is a treasury building with scenes depicting some of the temple equipment. The
weighing of gold, depictions of sacks of gold, and precious stones also appear on the walls.
Other temple valuables were probably kept in a better-concealed building immediately in front of
the north wall of the sanctuary.

Off to the left of the second Hypostyle Hall is the funerary chamber of Ramesses III, with the
god Thoth shown inscribing the king’s name on the sacred tree of Heliopolis.

The focus of the main axis of the temple is the sanctuary of Amun. It was once finished in
electrum with a doorway of gold and the doors themselves of copper inlaid with precious stones.
Behind the sanctuary lies a false door for Amun-Ra united with eternity, namely, the divine form
of Ramesses III.

On the southeastern side of the temple are the remains of a royal palace, which was probably
much smaller than the king’s main residence, serving as a spiritual palace as well as the
occasional royal visits. It was originally decorated with glazed tiles, and its bathrooms were lined
with limestone to protect the mud-brick. From the palace, the king could enter the first court, or
peruse it from a window of appearances on its southern side.

To the right of the complex entrance stands the earliest section of the complex, the so-called
"Small Temple", founded in the 18th Dynasty, and repeatedly expanded and usurped under later
dynasties. It stood on one of the most sacred spots in all Egypt, the primeval hill which first rose
out of the receding waters of Chaos. An inscription describes it as the burial place of the four
primal pairs of gods.

The core of this temple was begun by Hatshepsut and Tutmosis III, but her name was later
replaced by those of Tutmosis I and II. The structure was incorporated into Ramesses’ temple
complex and eclipsed by the construction of the mortuary temple. Its entrance was later replaced
by a pylon of the Nubian King Shabaka and then usurped by his nephew Taharqa. A small
fronting gateway was built during the 26th Dynasty and usurped during the 29th by Nectanebo I.
To the north of this Small Temple are the sacred lake and the so-called Nilometer, which is
actually a well with a passage leading down to groundwater level.

Inside and to the left of the eastern gateway are a group of chapel-tombs belonging to the 25th
and 26th Dynasties’ God’s Wives of Amun. They ruled Upper Egypt nominally at that time. On
the lintels above the entrances to these chapels may still be seen the "Appeal to the Living",
which encouraged passers-by to repeat the Offering Formula for the *kas* of these powerful women.

Because of its strong fortifications, Medinet Habu became a refuge in chaotic times. The workmen of Deir el-Medina moved there during the late 20th Dynasty, and the remains of the house of one Butehamun, a village scribe, can still be seen there at the western end.

During the Christian era, the entire area was covered by the Coptic town of Djeme and even the great temple itself was filled with dwellings and one court used as a church.

**The Inscriptions of Medinet Habu By Michele MacLaren, Liam McManus, and Megaera Lorenz**

When studying the Sea Peoples, scholars turn to one of the most detailed and well known texts concerning the Sea Peoples, the inscriptions from Medinet Habu. (http://www.courses.psu.edu/cams/cams400w_aek11/mhabu.html)

Medinet Habu is a mortuary temple that was constructed for Ramesess III at Thebes, in Upper Egypt. The temple decoration consists of a series of reliefs and texts telling of the many exploits of the king, from his campaign against the Libyans to, most importantly, his war against the Sea Peoples.

The texts and reliefs that deal with the Sea Peoples date to year eight of Ramesess III’s reign, approximately 1190 BCE. The significance of these texts is that they provide an account of Egypt’s campaign against the “coalition of the sea” from an Egyptian point of view. In the inscriptions, Ramesses alludes to the threat the Sea Peoples posed, as can be seen in this portion of text:

…the foreign countries made a conspiracy in their islands. All at once the lands were removed and scattered in the fray. No land could stand before their arms from Hatti, Kode, Carchemish, Artawa, and Alashiya on being cut off [at one time]. A camp was [set up] in one place in Amor. They desolated its people and its land was like that which has never come into being. (Medinet Habu, Year 8 inscription.)
The inscriptions go on to specify the groups which were involved in the "confederation": Peleset, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denyen, and Weshesh.

Although Ramesses III boasts of his defeat of the Sea Peoples' coalition on land and sea, the portion of text quoted above gives the impression that the Egyptians were facing a great and strong military presence. However, some scholars believe that the battles described at Medinet Habu were not one coherent event, but were actually small skirmishes between the Sea Peoples and the Egyptians at different intervals that were conflated in Ramesses' account into two grandiose battles. Barbara Cifola (1988: 275-306) concluded that, due to the vague manner in which the northern enemies were described, they could not possibly represent one force, and were probably never joined into a clearly defined confederation (see also O’conner 2000: 94).

The Medinet Habu inscriptions are also significant for their artistic depictions of the Sea Peoples. These provide valuable information about the appearance and accoutrements of the various groups, and can lend clues towards deciphering their ethnic backgrounds (Redford 1992: 251).

From the textual evidence on the temple walls, it appears that the Peleset and the Tjeker made up the majority of the Sea Peoples involved in the year 8 invasion. In the artistic depictions, both types are depicted wearing a fillet, from which protrudes a floppy plume and a protective piece down the nape of the neck. Their armament included long swords, spears and circular shields, and they are occasionally shown wearing body armor. Other groups, such as the Shekelesh and Teresh, are shown wearing cloth headdresses and a medallion upon their breasts. The weaponry that they carried consisted of two spears and a simple round shield. The Shardana soldiers are most obviously armored in the artistic depictions, due to the thick horned helmets that adorn their heads (Redford 1992: 252).

The land battle and sea battle scenes provide a wealth of information on the military styles of the Sea Peoples. The reliefs depicting the land battle show Egyptian troops, chariots and auxiliaries fighting the enemy, who also used chariots, very similar in design to Egyptian chariots. Although the chariots used by the Sea Peoples are very similar to those used by the Egyptians, both being pulled by two horses and using wheels with six spokes, the Sea Peoples had three soldiers per chariot, whereas the Egyptians only had one, or occasionally two.

The land battle scenes also give the observer some sense of the Sea Peoples’ military organization. According to the artistic representations, the Philistine warriors were each armed with a pair of long spears, and their infantry was divided into small groups consisting of four men each. Three of those men carried long, straight swords and spears, while the fourth man only carried a sword. The relief depicting the land battle is a massive jumble of figures and very chaotic in appearance, but this was probably a stylistic convention employed by the Egyptians to convey a sense of chaos. Other evidence suggests that the Sea Peoples had a high level of organization and military strategy (O’Conner 2000: 95).

A striking feature of the land battle scene is the imagery of ox-pulled carts carrying women and children in the midst of a battle. These carts seem to represent a people on the move (Sandars 1985: 120).

The other famous relief at Medinet Habu regarding the Sea Peoples is of the sea battle. This scene is also shown in a disorganized mass, but as was mentioned earlier, was meant to represent chaos, again contradicting the Egyptians’ descriptions of the military success and organization of the Sea Peoples. The sea battle scene is valuable for its depictions of the Sea Peoples' ships and their armaments. The Egyptians and the Sea Peoples both used sails as their main means of naval locomotion. However, interestingly, the Sea Peoples' ships appear to have no oars, which
could indicate new navigation techniques (Dothan 1982: 7). Another interesting feature of the Sea Peoples' ships is that all the prows are carved in the shape of bird heads, which has caused many scholars to speculate an Aegean origin for these groups. Wachsmann (2000) speculates that the sea battle relief shows the battle in progression, from beginning to end.

Medinet Habu still remains the most important source for understanding the Sea Peoples, their possible origins, and their impact on the Mediterranean world. To this day, no other source has been discovered that provides as detailed an account of these groups, and this mortuary temple still provides the only absolute date for the Sea Peoples.
Further Reading

Medinet Habu Inscriptions, reign of Ramesses III. Pp. 262-263 in:

Pritchard, J.

**Secondary Sources:**

Cifola, B.

Dothan, T.
1982 *Philistines and Their Material Culture*. London

O’Conner, D.

Redford, D.B.

Sandars, N.K.

Wachsmann, S.
Links


Nice series of “Powerpoint” presentations from Egypt. Use for class.

http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/egypt/thebes/medhabu/medhabu.html

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http://www.museumphotography.com/mhabu.htm

Photographs by Yarko Kobylecky exhibited at the Chicago Cultural Center (July 14-Sept 3, 2000) of the Oriental Institute. These are good quality artistic, rather than academic images.

http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/habu.htm

Marie Parsons, a student of Egyptian archaeology, offers a short essay with photographs introducing Medinet Habu. Her sources are encyclopedias.
Edom

Edom emerged as a people about the same time as the people of Israel during Iron I (1200-1150 B.C.E.). The land of Edom was bounded on the north by Wadi Hasa (Hebrew: Nahal Zered) on the south by the Dead Sea.

In some biblical traditions Edom is Israel’s covenant partner or “brother”. Edom is Seir, whose ancestor was Esau, the brother of Jacob (Gen 36:8-9; Deut 2:4-5, 22, 29). In other traditions, Edom is Israel’s enemy. In the Creation of the First Born of Israel, for example, the people of Edom refuse to allow the Hebrews to cross their land. (Num 20), and both Saul and David fight against them (1 Sam 14; 1 Kgs 1).

Yitzhaq Beit-Arieh (Tel Aviv University) directed excavations at Horvat Qitmit during the period when Israel and Edom were enemies. The people of Judah and the people of Edom fought to control the strategic coastal area north of the Gulf of Eilat. Tel el-Kheleifeh was Edom’s gateway to the sea, to Africa and to Arabia.

No Edomite writings have been recovered, although there are a few seals and inscriptions. Edomite uses the same alphabet as Hebrew with some unique letters. Similar script was found on jar handles which had been impressed with a seal. The seal mentions Qos, the divine patron of Edom.

Some fascinating red Edomite pottery made after 700 B.C.E. have also been recovered. The first samples were recovered in 1940 by Nelson Glueck at Tel el-Kheleifeh, a few miles north of the Gulf of Aqaba. More than 800 small ceramic statues, offering stands, reliefs and three incomplete inscriptions with the name “Qos” has also been found at the open air sanctuary at Horvat Qitmit. The style of the pottery is unique, not from Egypt, not from Syria-Palestine. For example, a small statue of a member of the divine assembly of Edom recovered at Horvat Qitmit, wearing a three-horned crown, has no known parallel.

Beit-Arieh, believes that after the war between Babylon and Judah ended in 587 B.C.E., Edom expanded into a severely weakened Judah. The Edomite shrines at Horvat Qitmit, 'Ein Hatzeva and in the Arava, with their extraordinary cult objects, may mark the path of the Edomite expansion into Judah. In any event, they clearly indicate an Edomite presence in the region connecting Edom and Judah.

Wings arched for take-off. This 8-inch-long Edomite sphinx was found at Hyorvat Qitmit. Although its overall style suggests Egyptian and Phoenician influence, the sphinx's goggle eyes, protruding nose and hair are typically Edomite. Recent excavations (Tel Aviv University; Baylor University) unearthed at Tel Malhata, about 3 miles north-west of Qitmit suggest that for a
short period the site was a center of an Edomite occupation of the eastern Negev in Judah. Perhaps the most dramatic find is a figurine of a flute player with a double-stemmed flute. Its amazing resemblance both in style and technique to the statue of a three-horned Godmother wearing a three horned crown found at Qitmit makes it virtually certain that the two figurines were produced in the same workshop - most probably at Tel Malhata. The vast material at these two sites indicate Edomite domination of the region at the end of 587 B.C.E.

Evidence of Edomite expansion into Judah also helps explain the presence of a series of Israelite forts at Horvat Uza, Horvat HaDrom, Horvat Anim, Horvat Tov and Arad built after 700 B.C.E.. Although archeologists have long known that a line of fortified Israelite outposts was erected in the eastern Negev at about this time, the reason for the protective barrier remained a mystery. It is now possible to affirm that these forts were built to protect against Edomite invasions.

"Here is an instance in which the Bible and archaeology splendidly illuminate one another," says Beit-Arieh. "The Biblical accounts of the relations between these 'unneighborly neighbors' can now be confirmed in large part by archaeological evidence."

One of the more neglected topics in the field of Biblical Geography involves the territorial extent of Edom's geographical domain (Bruce R. Crew, crewbruc@msu.edu). Earlier scholars have limited the geographical territories of Edom exclusively to Southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom (i.e. Edelman 1995: 2-3; Aharoni 1979: 40-41; Bartlett 1969: 1-20; Gleuck 1936: 152). Its boundaries included an area that lies between 'Wadi el-Hesa in the north, 'Wadi Arabah in the west, 'Wadi Hisma in the south and Transjordan's basalt desert in the east.

However, recent scholars have challenged this notion. They argue that the Edom's original territories also included the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion (Meshel 2000: 104; 1974: 147-150, xii; MacDonald 1994: 230-246; Rasmussen 1989: 91-92; Liver 1982: 324-325; Crew 1984: 2-3; 1981: 110-150; Is 1971: 370-371; Eod-Awd 1963: 622; Cohen 1962: 25). Moreover, two recent archeological discoveries have provided additional support for this notion. The first is the discovery of a large system of Israelite forts and settlements in the Negev's Central Highlands that dates to David and Solomon's time in the 11th-10th Centuries B.C. (Meshel 2000: 104; Na'amani 1992: 73; 1974: 147-150; xii; Cohen 1979: 61-79). In particular, excavations at Kadesh Barnea ('Ein el-Quiderat) and Kuntillet Ajrud reveal a continuous period of Israelite settlement throughout the period of the Judean monarchy (Meshel 1993a: 1458-1464; 1993b: 1517-1520; Cohen 1983; 1976: 49-50). The second is the absence of a similar system in southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom. Archeological surveys from this region further show that any Israelite settlement occurred between the 9th-7th Centuries B.C. after which there was a noticeable decline (Na'amani 1992: 73; Bartlett 1992a: 290 ff; MacDonald 1994: 230-246; 1992: 296 ff; Weippert 1979: 29-30).

Thus the notion of an Edom whose geographical territories lay solely in southern Transjordan is no longer a universal assumption. Moreover, three OT passages provide additional insight into this matter. Two of these passages refer to the stationing of Israelite garrisons in Edom by King David during his reign (2 Sam 8:14; 1 Chr 18:13). The third passage alludes to a flight to Egypt by Hadad, a member of the Edomite royal family, as a result of David's military campaign in
Edom where his forces under Joab's command slaughtered every living Edomite male (1 Kgs 11:14-22).

**THE 'SELF-CONSISTENCY' APPROACH**

Therefore, if the original territories of Edom's geographic domain lay solely in southern Transjordan, then a serious conflict exists between these OT passages and the archeological evidence. In efforts to resolve this conflict, then, it is important to use an approach that examines **ALL** of the geographical information about Edom in Biblical and extra-Biblical texts. Often known as the 'self-consistency' approach, (Faiman 2000: 115-117; 1994: 90-102; 1986: 209-219), its main premise assumes that some form of logical continuity must exist for a given topic in Biblical and extra-Biblical texts. Moreover, this logical continuity displays a strong pattern of self-consistency in terms of its overall geographical and historical content.

The 'self-consistency' approach combines what is known as the 'traditional' approach in Judaism with new information from geographical and archeological explorations (Faiman 1986: 210-211). It assumes that the geographical and historical information from Biblical and extra-Biblical texts display problematic difficulties rather than inherent contradictions for a given topic. Therefore, it is important to carefully study all references that pertain to a given topic in Biblical
and extra-Biblical texts before drawing any major conclusions when it comes to the interpretation of the geographical data so as to develop a complete picture about their respective contents (Faiman 1994: 91-93).

The 'self-consistency' approach contrasts with what has become known as the 'non-traditional' approach that has been used in more recent times Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical geographers as the main approach to the identification of Biblical sites (Faiman 1986: 211). In using the 'non-traditional approach', its adherents try to separate what they perceive as a kaleidoscope of different historical traditions written down at different times by different people and later edited into a series of contradictory, logically inconsistent statements by people known as redactors.

However, the primary problem with the 'non-traditional approach' rests in the fact that as newer and more subsequent knowledge emerges, any earlier theories are often viewed as obsolete and then discarded, thus losing any relevancy in relation to a given question. As a result, the 'non-traditional' approach has led to a process that has created a constant state of flux in the construction of logical and coherent theories on the identification of Biblical sites. According to its main premise, there can be no degree of consistency or understanding about geographical and historical information from Biblical and extra-Biblical texts for any given topic since the conclusions based upon earlier facts are often invalidated by the individual application of subjective presuppositions, each with their own interpretation of the geographical and historical data.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF SEIR WITH EDOM IN BIBLICAL TEXTS

One example of a case where the 'self-consistency' approach can be applied to Biblical texts for answers to the identification of Biblical sites involves passages that provide geographical information on the location of Edom's geographical domain in the hill country of Seir (Gen. 36:20-21; Num 24:18; Deut 2:1-12; Judg 5:4; 1 Chr 1:38-43; 2 Chr 25:11,14; Ezk 25:8,12-14). A number of these passages in Biblical texts equate Seir and Edom with place-names that are synonymous with one another (Gen 32:3; 36:6-9). Therefore, the passages suggest that Seir and Edom comprise an entity should be viewed as one and the same in terms of their respective geographical locations.

However, in using the 'non-traditional' approach to this question, J.R. Bartlett (1992a: 287-295; 1992b: 13-19; 1969: 3-5) rejects Seir's equation with Edom. Bartlett contends that Seir and Edom comprise two different geographical entities that lay at separate locations. The hill country of Seir existed in the Negev's Central Highlands while the territory known as Edom was confined to southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom. Bartlett further argues that Seir's identification with Edom resulted from later additions to Biblical texts that were made by a redactor sometime after the Edomites migrated into the Negev's Central Highlands between the 8th-6th Centuries B.C.

However, in contrast to Bartlett's use of the 'non-traditional approach for this question, the 'self-consistency' approach permits the gleaning of additional geographical information from other Biblical passages on Edom's original geographical domain (Gen 36:20-21; Deut 1:12, 22; 1 Chr 1:38-43). This additional information shows that the use of Seir as a geographic place-name resulted from the earlier settlement of the Negev's Central Highlands by a prominent family who
came from a group of people known as the Horites (Deut 1:12, 22). Following the Edomites' migration into the region, they expelled the Horites from their former homeland and changed the name of the Horites' former homeland to Edom (Edelman 1995: 9-10). As a result, the newer place-name Edom became a permanent fixture as its new occupants remained in the region over a longer period of time.

OTHER REFERENCES TO EDOM IN BIBLICAL AND NON-BIBLICAL TEXTS

The use of the 'self-consistency' approach to the location of Edom's geographical domain further helps to resolve other problematic difficulties in Biblical and extra-Biblical texts on the location of the original territories of Edom's geographical domain. A military campaign against the Horites in the hill country of Seir by a group of Mesopotamian kings makes logical sense if the original territories of Edom's geographical domain included the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion (Gen 14:6-7). However, if Edom's original territories were limited solely to southern Transjordan, then it requires the re-location of Kadesh Barnea (earlier known as En-Mispat) in order to provide a proper geographical setting for this passage. This relocation is untenable in light of Kadesh Barnea's long-established identification at 'Ein el-Quiderat' somewhere along the western edge of the Negev's Central Highlands. Moreover, the Wilderness of Paran lies within the central portion of the Negev as opposed to southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom. It reaches originate from deep within the Sinai Peninsula before draining eastward into 'Wadi Arabah (Edelman 1995: 9; Baly 1974: 247-248; Karmon 1971: 287; Orni and Efrat 1966: 15, 20).

The Simeonite campaign against a remnant band of the Amalekites at Mt. Seir also encounters problems if the original territories of Edom's geographic domain were limited solely to southern Transjordan (1 Chr 4:42-43). This would have placed the Simeonites' tribal allotment a considerable distance away from the Negev's northwest portion, part of an area that belongs to the Biblical Negev and exists in closer proximity to the Negev's Central Highlands (Rainey 1984: 100-101). It is highly unlikely that the Simeonites would have gone to so much trouble to eliminate a small Amalakite band living in southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom because it would have posed no immediate military threat to the Simeonites. In addition, the Judahite clans who lived in the Biblical Negev would have provided a solid buffer zone against any attack from this remnant of the Amalakites.

A 14th Century B.C. reference from the El-Amarna letters (No. 288) further mentions the loss of Egyptian control over an area in the land of Canaan that extended from the sites of Gath-Carmel in the north to Mt. Seir in the south (Prichard 1955: 488). The geographical setting for this El-Amarna letter suggests that Mt. Seir's location lay somewhere in the vicinity of southwestern Canaan in closer proximity to Egypt as opposed to southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom (MacDonald 1994: 231-233). Moreover, the appearance of Mt. Seir in this El-Amarna Letter occurs in connection with several known cities and towns of Canaan's southern Coastal Plain and western Shephelah regions but contains no reference whatsoever to cities and towns located in southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom (Edelman 1995: 9). That represents a rather strange coincidence if Mt. Seir's location lay solely in southern Transjordan rather than the Negev's Central Highlands.
A Biblical passage from the Israelite Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings also places the location of Kadesh Barnea right on the border with Edom (Num 20:16). The passage states that Moses dispatched messengers to the king of Edom from this location to request safe passage for the Israelites along a road known as the 'King's Highway'. If Edom's original territories were limited to southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom, then the Israelite messengers would have had to traverse the entire east-west length of the Negev's Central Highlands in order to meet with the king of Edom. This possible scenario conflicts directly with the geographic information contained in this passage.

In addition, there are only three-four references to the title of the King's Highway in Biblical texts, all of which are associated with the Israelites' request for safe passage through non-Israelite territorial domains (Num 20:17, 19; 21:22; Deut 2:27). Yet this title is strangely absent from other ancient sources that pertain to the history of kingdom and city-states that lay in southern Transjordan. It is also important to note that the route passing through the Negev that connects the site of Kadesh Barnea to 'Wadi Arabah is known in Arabic as the 'Darb es- Sultan', which literally means 'Way of the King' (Glueck 1959: 228-229). Recent studies have shown that this title was used as an appellative to designate a public or high road in antiquity, a phenomenon that appears in Aramaic and Akkadian sources during Assyrian times (Weippert 1979: 23; Obed 1970: 182). Thus the title that is displayed in these Biblical passages could have easily denoted the ancient route that crossed the east-west length of the Negev's Central Highlands, as well as the north-south route that traverses Transjordan's eastern highlands (Rasmussen 1989: 91-92, 242).

Furthermore, Biblical texts state that the burial place of Moses' brother Aaron lay at Mt. Hor right along the border with Edom somewhere in the immediate vicinity of Kadesh Barnea (Num 20:22, 23; 33:37-39). The passages state that Mt. Hor comprised the first location at which the
Israelites camped following their departure from Kadesh Barnea. The writings of Flavius Josephus place Mt. Hor in southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom at a location traditionally identified with Jebel Harun's twin peaks (Antiquities IV.4.7, hereafter noted as Antiq. in the Loeb Classical Library). However, the later writings of Josephus are viewed as being in error whenever they conflict with information from earlier historical sources such as Biblical texts (Roth 1992: 287).

If the site of Kadesh Barnea exists at 'Ein el-Quiderat along Negev's Central Highlands' western edge, though, then it makes logical sense to place Mt. Hor somewhere in its immediate vicinity. There are a number of suitable candidates that exist in closer proximity to 'Ein el-Quiderat as compared with Jebel Harun's twin peaks in terms of prospective sites for Mt. Hor. These include Jebel Madurah or 'Inaret el-Khoreisheh (Cleave 1994: 212; Roth 1992: 287; Rasmussen 1989: 91; Aharoni 1979: 202, 436), Jebel 'Araif en Naqa (Faiman 1986: 213-214), and Mt. Ramon (Har-El 1983: 430).

Moreover, the description of the ancient boundaries between Israel and Edom further state that the kingdom of Edom bordered Israel on the south rather than the east according to the geographical information found in Biblical texts (Num 34:3-5; Josh 15:1-4, 21-32). The border began at the Dead Sea's southern tip, moved up the Ascent of Akrabbim and then turned westward. It passed through the Wilderness of Zin and touched the sites of Hazzaraddar, Azman and Kadesh Barnea before reaching the Brook of Egypt, a landmark commonly associated with 'Wadi el-Arish. From these border descriptions in Biblical texts, it is clear that the boundary between passed through the Negev's Central Highlands but barely touched southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom to the east (Aharoni 1979: 67-72).

The OT passages alluding to David's conquest of Edom have already been mentioned earlier in this article (i.e. 2 Sam 8:14; 1 Kgs 11:14-22; 1 Chr 18:13). The system of Israelite forts and settlements discovered in the Negev's Central Highlands displays at least 45 different sites that can fit anywhere from two-four different classifications according to size, layout and function (Finkelstein 1989: 189; Cohen 1979: 61-78). Moreover, a large number of these sites display wheel-made Israelite pottery, a type that strongly resembles characteristics common to ceramic ware found at other locations in ancient Israel (northern, southern), including the Biblical Negev, during this period of archeological settlement (Herzog 1983:41; Cohen 1979:61-78). A large number of these Israelite forts and settlements also contain agricultural installations that entailed the farming of dry wadi beds in the Negev's Central Highlands via a form of desert agriculture known as 'runoff farming' (Evenari, Shanon and Tadmor 1982; Cohen 1979:61-78).

In addition, it is important to note that this line of forts and settlements along the eastern edge of the Negev's Central Highlands bears a striking resemblance to the border descriptions as displayed in Biblical texts between the southern Israelite tribe of Judah and Edom (Cohen 1979: 77-78). The nature of these forts and settlements further suggests that they possessed some form of sedentary capabilities, although the exact degree and extent remains the subject of intense debate (Finkelstein and Perevolotsky 1990: 67-88; 1989: 189-201; Crew 1981: 103-108; Cohen 1979: 61-78). These forts and settlements in the Negev's Central Highlands could have also been manned by tribes who were loyal to the ancient Israelites and had inhabited the Biblical Negev since earlier times (i.e. Simeonites, Judahite clans). Their semi-nomadic lifestyle and loyalty to the United Monarchy would have enabled them to quickly adapt to life as soldier-farmers in a
desert environment (1 Sam 27:6-12). Moreover, incentives from the United Monarchy could have induced individuals of these groups to settle in the Negev's Central Highlands, particularly along Israel's southern border with Edom.

If the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion are included in the original territories of Edom's geographical domain, then an ensuing harmony occurs between the geographical information contained in these passages and the available archeological evidence. In addition, it would provide a vital clue as to why the Israelites under David and Solomon would have gone to so much trouble to construct a large system of forts and settlements in the Negev's Central Highlands (Na'aman 1992: 73-74). These forts and settlements would have been needed to subdue an Edomite population that was hostile to the Israelites, as well as protect the trade routes that passed through the Negev before linking up with other land routes to the Orient via the Arabian Peninsula.

Aerial View of Ein el-Qudeira, identified by most scholars as Kadesh Barnea

Hadad's escape to Egypt and subsequent return during Solomon's reign also fits a geographical location that is better suited to an original Edomite geographical domain whose territories included the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion (Na'aman 1992: 74-79). Otherwise Hadad's escape would have required an arduous trip across an area already occupied by an Israeliite enemy. David's forces could have effectively cut Hadad's escape route to Egypt by controlling the main access points from southern Transjordan that passed through the Negev Central Highlands and southern portion. Furthermore, Hadad's later alliance with Egypt via marriage would have given the Egyptians a vital source of intelligence on troop strength and movements along the Israelites' southern flank. This would have greatly aided the planning and execution of a surprise attack by Shishak against Israeliite forts and settlements in the Negev's
Central Highlands during Rehoboam's reign (1 Kgs 14:25-26). The sudden destruction of Israelite forts and settlements in the region during this period supports such a possible scenario (Na'aman 1992: 81-83; Aharoni 1979: 327-330).

Finally, Biblical texts describe a military expedition against Moab by Israel, Judah and Edom that transpired during the 8th Century B.C. (2 Kgs 3:6-27). According to Biblical texts, the invasion route passed through the Wilderness of Edom and they include a prophetic word given by the prophet Elisha, which stated that the valley in which the invading armies stood would fill up with water but the armies would see neither wind nor rain (2 Kgs 3:16-17, 20, 22).

Elisha's description of the climate conditions aptly describes the erratic rainfall patterns that characterize the Negev's Central Highlands during its winter season (Evenari, Shanon and Tadmor 1982: 2-6, 63-70). Rains frequently fall in higher and more distant elevations but their floodwaters are conveyed to lower elevations where sunny skies exist with little or no rainfall. This geographical phenomenon is particularly evident along 'Wadi Arabah's western side since it lies in a rain shadow created by the presence of higher elevations along the eastern edges of the Biblical Negev and southern Judean hill country.

However, the climatic conditions in southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom and 'Wadi Arabah's eastern portion are much different than those found in the Negev's Central Highlands. The mountains of Edom are two-three times higher in elevation and receive more than twice the amount of annual rainfall (Baly 1974: 233-236; Karmon 1971: 291-293; Orni and Efrat 1966: 29-32, 88, 92-95). Moreover, the rain shadow that exists in 'Wadi Arabah's western portion is noticeably absent from its eastern counterpart (Baly: 1974: 59-64, 203; Karmon 1971: 317, 331-333). As a result, then, the cliffs along 'Wadi Arabah's eastern portion would not block out the physical effects of rainstorms that pass through the region from the Mediterranean Sea during the winter months.

In addition, the wadis that comprise the landscape in southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom are oriented east-west rather than north-south, thus resulting in weather conditions that are much different from those found in Biblical texts (Murakami 1995: 69-70, 78-79; Baly 1974: 234; Orni and Efrat 1966: 92-95). Due to the absence of a rain shadow effect in southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom, any invading army marching into Moab could have easily observed and/or experienced the effects of approaching winter storms from the Mediterranean Sea (i.e. rains, winds). Thus the geographical setting for the invasion route as described in Elisha's prophecy fits a geographical context that is better suited to the physical environment of the Negev's Central Highlands rather than southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom, particularly along Wadi 'Arabah's northwest portion.
REFERENCES TO EDOM IN JOSEPHUS

The 1st Century writings of Flavius Josephus also provide an additional source of geographical information on the extent of the original territories in Edom's geographical domain. Josephus writes that Esau first lived in the hill country of Seir following his departure from Hebron, an Isrealite town located in the Judean hill country's southern portion (*Antiq.* IV:2:1-3). According to Biblical texts, Essau was the first son of Issac who later became the founding father of the Edomites (Gen 36:9). However, by the time of Josephus, the area formerly known as the hill country of Seir now belonged to a people known as the Idumaeans, or remaining Edomite remnant. Josephus further mentions in another passage that the prophet Elijah passed through the town of Beersheba during his flight from Jezebel (*Antiq.* VIII.13.7). Josephus states that the town of Beersheba comprised the southernmost town that belonged to the Israelite tribe of Judah, whose territory now lay right on the border of a country that belonged to the Idumaeans. Finally, in a third passage, Josephus refers to the location where the Israelites under Moses leadership had first tried to enter the land of Canaan from the south as an area of land that now bordered the country belonging to the Idumaeans or former Edomite remnant (*Antiq.* IV.4.5).

While the information on earlier Biblical events found in Josephus does not always match the descriptions for these same historical events from Biblical texts, nevertheless one thing is perfectly clear. The geographical information contained in the writings of Josephus that pertains to Seir and Edom (Idumaea) location remains consistent with a geographical setting in which the original territories of Edom's geographical domain must have included the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion. Thus Josephus preserves the geographical context found in Biblical texts which depict an Edom whose original territories were not limited solely to southern Transjordan.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the use of the 'self-sufficiency approach', then, it is possible to conclude that the geographical information contained in Biblical and extra-Biblical texts overwhelmingly support the inclusion of the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion into the original territories
of Edom's geographical domain. The geographical and historical details that appear in ALL of those references that pertain to Edom in Biblical and extra-Biblical texts displays a pattern that is too self-consistent to have otherwise been the case. Such a conclusion would also explain the appearance of Seir and Edom together in passages such as Deut 33:2 and Judg 5:4, whose geographical setting fits a context other than the Arabian Peninsula (Heiser 1998: 1-11). The appearances of Seir and Edom in conjunction with Mt. Paran and Mt. Sinai in these two passages also provide a single and coherent geographical unit that is better suited to the Negev-Sinai region. Thus the location of Mt. Sinai somewhere in the Sinai Peninsula's western-central portion is totally consistent with the inclusion of the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portions into the original territories of Edom's geographical domain (Franz 2000: 101-113; Faiman 2000:115-118; Rasmussen 1989: 88-90; Har-El 1983: 242-275)

Finally, all of these conclusions are consistent with the data that has been compiled as a result of geographical and archeological research during the past 30-40 years in the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion, together with southern Transjordan's mountains of Edom. Moreover, the inclusion of the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion in the original territories of Edom's geographic domain provides a clue as to the identity of the earlier EBIV-MBI inhabitants in the Negev's Central Highlands. Biblical texts state that prior to the settlement of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir, the Horites inhabited the region (Deut 2:12). No other ancient sources (Biblical or extra-Biblical) provide even the slightest hint as to the identity of these earlier inhabitants for the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion.

The later appearance of the Nabateans in the Ancient Near East is also easier to understand when their ascendance is viewed in the context of an Edomite geographical domain whose original territories included the Negev's Central Highlands and southern portion1. The location of the Nabateans' former homeland in the Arabian Peninsula's northwest portion would have placed them in an ideal position from which they could have taken control of those territories that formerly comprised ancient Edom prior to its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar (Bartlett 1979: 64-66). The Nabateans could have easily exploited the resulting political and cultural chaos in order to acquire supremacy over all of the other Ancient Near Eastern nomadic tribes. More than anything else, it was the Nabateans' control of the trade routes that connected their capital at Petra in southern Transjordan with the Mediterranean port at Gaza via the Negev's Central Highlands that provided them with their wealth and prestige as a geo-political power in the Ancient Near East.

On the other hand, the surviving Edomite remnant migrated into the Biblical Negev and southern portion of the Judean hill country following Edom's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. This Edomite remnant later became known as the Idumeans, who were incorporated into neighboring Judea during the 2nd Century B.C. following their conquest by John Hyrcanus I (Edelman 1995: 5). It is only against this geographical and historical backdrop that the Nabateans' subsequent ascendance and control of the Negev's Central Highlands, together with its southern portion, can best be understood.

**FOOTNOTES**
The Nabateans' ascendance as a geo-political power in the Negev and Ancient Near East is a subject that must be left for a future article. In particular, the role of the geographical-historical setting of the Nabateans in fostering the birth of early Christianity comprises a noteworthy topic.
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Chapter 25

Petra: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Petra

The archaeological picture during this phase shows a considerable increase of Judahite settlement in the eastern Negev, especially as regards fortified sites along the eastern border, of which four strongholds - Horvat Tov, Tel Arad, Horvat Uza and Horvat Radum - are representative. In addition, the settlement at Tel Ira, which at that time was the largest and most strongly fortified town of the region, emphasizes the need for such strongholds.

The hypothesis that fortified settlements were built to guard against incursions by bordering Arab desert tribes or by Edomites (Aharoni 1981:151; Malamat 1983:284-185; Na'aman 1987:15; Rainey 1987:25; Ephal 1982:81-169; Beit-Arieh 1995) seems valid. Historically, this view has a basis in numerous biblical passages, from which it is clear that relations between Judah and Edom abounded in repeated struggles, conquests and a deep hostility that had its origins already in the period of the United Kingdom (II Samuel 8-14; I Kings 22:48; II Kings 8:20-22, 14:7, 22, 16:6; Isaiah 35, 63:1-6; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ezekiel 24:2 14, 35:1-6; Joel 4:19; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah; Malachi 1:25; Liver 1964).

Archaeological support is provided by the Edomite pottery dating to the 7th century B.C.E. that was found at many settlements in the eastern Negev, e.g. Tel Aroer, Tel Malhata, Tel Arad, Tel Masos and Tel >Ira (Mazar, E. 1985; Beit-Arieh 1995, 1998). There are also several epigraphic finds from the same period that contribute to the evidence. Among these are a seal inscribed i½aºâ (leqosa QWS = QAUS, the principal Edomite deity), a fragment of an Edomite ostracon from Tel Aroer (Biran and Cohen 1981:264; Biran 1982:162), Inscriptions Nos. 3, 21, 40 from Arad, in which both Edom and Edomite persons are mentioned in a somewhat obscure context (Aharoni 1981), Ostracon No. 24 from Arad in which the Edomite threat looming over Judah is made dramatically plain in the last phrase "Lest Edom come there" (Aharoni 1981), and the ostracon from Horvat Uza bearing a blessing in the name of the Edomite deity Qaus addressed to a high Edomite official resident either at the fort itself or somewhere nearby (Beit-Arieh and Cresson 1985). This last may testify to an official Edomite presence in the region. Further important confirmation of this Edomite presence is the shrine at Horvat Qitmit (Beit-Arieh 1995) apparently designed to serve the ritual needs of an Edomite population in this area. New evidence of Edomite involvement in the eastern Negev came to light recently when more Edomite pottery and Qitmit-type figurines were uncovered in our excavations at Tel Malhata (Beit-Arieh 1998). Additional indications of Edomite control of the route from the Arava to the Arad - Beersheba valley has been discovered of late at En Hazeva in the northern Arava, where a small Edomite cult place was uncovered (Cohen 1995; Cohen and Israel 1995a; 1995b).

The above evidence may be taken to reflect Edomite penetration into the eastern Negev, probably around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. The reasons for this incursion may well have been to control trade routes through the region, and also perhaps to exploit its economic
resources. Therefore the fortifications in the eastern Negev can plausibly be attributed to Judahite - Edomite hostility at a time when Assyria, the then dominant power in the region, was diverting its major strength toward Egypt and was physically in control of the southern coastal plain of Eretz Israel (Na'aman 1987:7-11).

MacDonald. Burton

**Extent of the Territory**

Edom, east of the Arabah, and Seir, west of the Arabah, were both parts of Edom. The boundaries of Edom east of the Arabah are the Wadi Hesa in the north to the Gulf of Aqaba in the south.

**History of Explorations**

Burckhard visited Petra on August 22, 1812.

Nelson Glueck’s analysis of his excavations dominated the understanding of Edom for some 50 yrs.

**Present Status of the Archaeology of Edom**

No Bronze Age sites have been excavated in Edom. There is scant evidence of any population, either sedentary or nomadic in Edom during both the MB and LB periods. In the Iron Age population settlements appear along Wadi el Hasa and moved south.

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*EDOM IN HISTORY*

**A. Early History of Edom**

“Edom” refers to the mountains of red Nubian sandstone which extend N-S between the Wadi Arabah and the Syro-Arabian Desert. Edom was the Sedona of the ANE.

Egyptians refer to the people of Edom as “shoshu”.

The Hebrews refer to the people of Edom as “Horite” or cave dwellers.

**Dushares and Uzza**
The goddess Al-'Uzza
Al-'Uzza was the goddess of power. The chief goddesses of the Nabataean pantheon were Al-'Uzza, Allat, and Manawat. Under Hellenization, Al-'Uzza was later identified with Aphrodite, Urania/Venus Caelestis, and also linked to the Egyptian goddess, Isis.

Representations of Al-'Uzza are carved on the Treasury at Petra. The baetyl of al-Uzza-Aphrodite is carved to the left of al-Kutbay. She is also mentioned in the Bosra inscription as a deity of the city, and her cult continued at Mecca until the coming of Islam.

Some archeologists feel that the female goddesses in Petra are all Al-Uzza, but others feel that they are Isis, the Egyptian supreme goddess. The problem with this is that Isis does not appear in any Nabataean god-lists, nor in any known theophoric names. Yet, her attributes and aspects appear to be present in Nabataean temples.

On the other hand an Osiris (Isis) fragment from the Temple of the Winged Lions in Petra has been found, and Nabataean inscriptions have been located in Egypt. These provide us with evidence of how far the Nabataeans traveled and traded, and give us clues of how the Nabataean sculptors could have borrowed traits from Osiris (Isis) in Egypt that they applied to their own goddess, Al 'Uzza.

At Et-Tannur (located in Wadi Hasa, on the northern border of the Inner Kingdom), archeologists found that the supreme female goddess was also associated with vegetation and grain. Her symbols also included: leaves, fruits, cornucopia, and the usual cereal grain stalks.

These aspects also indicate other connotations: fertility, and hence love; vegetation, and hence funerary relationships. The result of the accumulation of these attributes makes her appear to be a “supreme” goddess; Mistress of Earth and, for that matter, Mistress of the Underworld, as well. As she also appears on the Nabataean zodiac, she also becomes the Mistress of Heaven in many archeologists' writings.

When all of these factors were taken together, several archeologists concluded that a single goddess is involved and that she is, indeed, a “supreme” goddess, under various aspects, and with a multitude of attributes and symbols, such as being portrayed in feline form.

At the Temple of the Winged Lions in Petra, a considerable number of cultic materials have been recovered which demonstrate the importance of Al 'Uzza. Some of the materials include: a ring-seal showing a nude goddess, a crowned female goddess riding a dolphin, dolphin frieze decorations, drilled cowry shells of a variety sacred to Venus, feline capital decorations and feline statuette fragment, a bronze feline head, and “Eye-Idol“ blocks. (See illustration on page 154)

By the time of Greek contact with Egypt, it was convenient for the Egyptians to accept cross identification of their gods with foreign deities in order to enhance their own stature. In this way, during the Graeco-Roman period, the cult of Isis had spread throughout the civilized world and she acquired distinct aspects, attributes, and symbols. The Egyptian goddess Isis possessed the
powers of a water goddess, an earth goddess, a grain corn goddess, and a queen of the Underworld.

By absorbing the other local Egyptian deities, Isis achieved a position for which there could be no other competition. Greek, and then Hellenistic, and finally Roman contact opened even wider opportunities for her to be identified in other pantheons under different names. So it is, that Isis, the Egyptian goddess, can be identified in some way with al-Uzza in Petra.

Isidorus, in the 1st century BC, declared that all foreign local names for any goddesses actually referred to Isis, (as does Apuleius later on).

As Isis became the supreme goddess of heaven, earth, the underworld, and the sea, her symbols became grain, poppies, the cornucopia, the zodiac, fish, the tyche, crown, lions, ships, pinecones, and even a distinctive knot on her garment.

Other bits of information regarding the Isis cult are found in ancient literature. Apuleius notes that, at the temple to Isis at Cenchreae, the image of the goddess was veiled by curtains. Solmsen cites a reference by Tibullus to “painted panels” in temples of the Isis cult in Rome, presumably like those in the House of Mysteries and elsewhere at Pompeii.

Anude goddess riding a dolphin on a ring seal found in Petra was identified as Atargatis, the goddess of the Winged Lions Temple. This is questionable because an inscription above the spring in Wadi Es Siyyagh reads: “Atargatis of Manbig.” Manbig is Hierapolis, which is located in Northern Syria. Rather, the temple is probably that of Al-Uzza. The Nahl Hever Scrolls mention that al-Uzza had, in the 2nd century AD, a temple in the Petra.

Archeologists have found dolphins associated with this goddess at Et Tannur, Khirbet Brak, Abda, and Wadi Rumm. In Petra, they found a ring seal with the Mistress of the Sea wearing a crown and riding a dolphin.

The symbol of the dolphin was sometimes used by the ancients to portray the goddess who frolics around seafaring vessels, “protecting” and “guarding” them on their way. It is an apt symbol for she who rules the waves. This can be compared with the widespread use of the bull as a symbol for gods of power. The dolphin appeared as a symbol as early as the Sinope coin (6th century BC), and was later attested by Aristotle in 330 B.C. While some people have expressed their amazement that desert nomads would have a dolphin figure identified with their goddess, those familiar with the sea-going exploits of the Nabataeans realize how well this fits with their history.

**The goddess Manawat**

Manawat was considered to be the goddess of destiny or fate. Under Hellenization, Manawat was associated with the Greek/Roman goddess Nemesis/Fate.

As with Al Uzza, Manawat similarly does not emerge to any major role among the Nabataeans, judging from the relative infrequency with which she was invoked in ancient inscriptions. Her major domain would seem to have been around Hegra, although she, as Al-Uzza, survived until
the coming of Islam. Her image does not appear among the pre-Islamic “idols” at Mecca, however, and she may never have been represented there.

**The goddess Allat**

Allat was known as the goddess of spring and fertility. Under Hellenization Allat was later identified with the Greek/Roman goddess Athena/Minerva, and sometimes with Aphrodite or Urania/Venus Caelestis. Inscriptions mentioning Allat range from Hegra in Saudi Arabia to the Hauran in Syria. They include terms of reverence and adoration lasting until the Islamic period. Even at the founding of Islam, an image of Allat, along with one of Al-'Uzza, were to be found at Mecca. Some historians claim that respect, if not approval, of this ancient goddess was shown by Mohammed himself, and by other early followers of the Muslim prophet.

**The god Dushares**

Dushares was known as the lord of the Shara Mountains. These mountains surround Selah and Petra along the edge of Wadi Arabah.

Dushares was a principal god of the Nabataeans and seems to have been a god of the daytime. Shaj al-Qaum, on the other hand was the nighttime god, protecting the souls of sleepers and accompanying them on their nightly journey through the heavenly realms. Initially and traditionally, Dushares was represented in an aniconic form such as a square block, as is represented by the baetyls of Petra.

In 106 AD, after the reorganization of the Nabataean kingdom in conjunction with several adjacent cities of the Decapolis as the Roman province of Arabia, the cult of Dushares continued to prosper. The coins of the province's major cities in the imperial age bear eloquent witness to the strength of this great Nabataean deity. More than that, they reveal not only the prevalent aniconic representations of Dushares but a human face for him as well.

These coins are the only explicit and unambiguous guide archeologists have today. The earliest appearance of a figure of Dushares is on a coin from Bostra commemorating the future emperor Commodus as Caesar (AD 177). The figure on this coin does not replace the baetyls of Dushares either at Bostra or, as far as we know, anywhere else.

On the face of the coin is a young man with long flowing hair similar to the style that was popular among Nabataean kings. Under Roman rule, Nabataean kings ceased to exist, so this coin demonstrates an ingenious portrait of a cross between a Nabataean king and the god Dushares.

This coin must have passed Roman inspection because the next surviving image of Dushares as a young man occurs on a coin from Bostra of Caracalla as Caesar, in 209/210 AD. The features are again striking with an even greater profusion of flowing hair than before.

Another coin of the same year and struck on the same obverse die bears a reverse of Dushares as a baetyl in the middle between two smaller baetyls on a platform. This scene can be observed more clearly on Bostra bronzes of Elagabalus, depicting with greater detail the cult at Bostra.
The central and larger baetyl is that of Dushares, whose name appears on the coin. The two smaller baetysl flank him on either side and probably represent attendant deities. Some archeologists have wondered if these three gods comprised an Arabian trinity.

The baetysl stand on a raised platform to which access is gained by a flight of steps. This presentation of the baetyl of Dushares at Bostra is not unlike those found in other cities, even where the shape of the baetyl itself is markedly different. At Adraa, for example, the baetyl identified as that of Dushares is a large round dome, but the platform on which he sits is similar to the one at Bostra. One of these texts inscribed on the Qasr at-Turkman in Petra names “Dushara” as “the god of our lord,” and his representation sits on a platform, just as on the coins.

An inscription found in the Siq in Petra tells us of officials who were in charge of religious festivals that were associated with Dushares. Along with this, some Nabataean graffiti refers to people who were classified as priests.

**The Resurrection of the Dead (Dan 10:1—12:13)**

**The Stories of Esau (Gen 36)**

**Lot and his Daughters**

**(Num 20:14-21)**

There was no state of Edom in the LB period. The Edom at Kadesh, some 60 miles west of the Wadi Arabah, in the Stories of Moses projects the Edom which was conquered by David, and became a brother to Israel. (2 Sam 8:13-14; 1 Kgs 11:15-16; Ps 60). Joab executed his Edomite prisoners (Amos 1:11). Hadad, however, escaped to Egypt. (1 Kgs 11:14-22) Eloth in the land of Edom was Solomon’s port city. (1 Kgs 9:26)

Edom declared its independence from Israel under Joram, and became a sovereign state. (pace 2 Kgs 3).

**Jepthah Delivers Israel from Ammon (Judg 11:1-40)**
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Dushara
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Chapter 26

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Dead Sea Valley

Jericho

John Garstang (1876-1956) began his academic career in mathematics at Jesus, College, Oxford, but, while still an undergraduate, turned his attention to archaeology. His first fieldwork was done in Egypt, where, at the age of twenty-three, he joined Flinders Petrie. He then worked in Anatolia (1904-1909), returning for a final season of excavations at Sakçagözü in 1911. His influential work, *The Land of the Hittites*, was published in 1910. At the age of 26, he was appointed honorary reader in Egyptian archaeology at Liverpool University. Five years later (in 1907) he became Professor of the Methods and Practice of Archaeology, a post he held until his retirement in 1941. From 1909 until 1914 he excavated in the Sudan, at Meroë, capital of an ancient Nubian kingdom.

Garstang was the founding Director of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem in 1920. In that same year, he made what is probably his most lasting contribution to archaeology by becoming the founding Director of the British Mandatory Department of Antiquities of Palestine, a post he held until 1926. He drafted the country's antiquities laws, which were notably liberal, enlightened, and practical. Garstang used the material belonging to the Ottoman Palestine Museum as the basis of the collection for the Palestine Museum in Jerusalem, now the Rockefeller Museum. He carried out the first post-World War I excavations in Palestine at Ashkelon, followed by a series of soundings at sites across the country. In 1922, at a historic meeting with W. F. Albright of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and L-H Vincent of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française, Garstang formulated the terminology still used for the classification of the archaeological material of the southern Levant. From 1930 to 1936 he carried out a major excavation at Jericho, funded by Sir Charles Marston. Although this excavation was poorly published, and although Garstang's views of Jericho regarding the accounts in Exodus and regarding the Israelite conquest are no longer accepted, his work there provided the first information about the existence of an pre-pottery Neolithic culture there.

Following World War II, Garstang returned to Anatolia, where he became the founding Director of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara (1947). His final excavation was at the site of Mersin, in Cilicia, where he discovered important remains of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Two days before his death, though very ill and weak, he was able to realize his wish to revisit this site, coming ashore from the boat on which he was enjoying a last cruise.

Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger

Ernst Sellin was born in 1867 a few miles away from Rostock. He studied theology, but soon archaeology began to gain his interest. While he was on his first chair for Old Testament in Vienna (since 1897) he already was planning excavations in Palestine.
Sellin managed to interest the German Oriental Society in Berlin in his project. After strenuous journeys and negotiations with the Turkish authorities over a license for archaeological work, he was finally permitted to begin the first excavation by a German Theologian (1902–1904) at Taanach near Megiddo. Sellin’s only scientific assistant at Taanach in 1902 was Gottlieb Schumacher who started to dig at Megiddo on his own in 1903.

After finishing his archaeological work in Taanach, Sellin received permission to dig at Tell Dotan but he abandoned this encounter. In 1906, Sellin planned to do archaeological research at Tell ed-Duweir (Lachish) but later the authorities withdrew permission. So in 1907 he began excavation in Jericho in cooperation with the German Oriental Society.

Sellin was not an archaeologist. Critics tried to accuse him of nonprofessional work. It was G.E. Wright who brought his work – under the circumstances of Sellin’s times – into more positive regard. Sellin’s strength was a flexible and innovative intellect coupled with the effort to connect biblical scholarship and archaeology, which was a completely new endeavor especially for Germany. Sellin experienced difficulty in finding competent archaeologists as partners for excavations in Palestine who had both scientific and biblical backgrounds. Apart from H. Thiersch there was only one classical archaeologist who was competent and willing to join Sellin: Carl Watzinger.

Carl Watzinger had studied classical archaeology and philology, and had achieved major results in different fields: Hellenistic arts, Hellenistic vase paintings and monuments of Palestine, Syria and Cyprus. He wrote a doctoral thesis on southern Italian vase paintings (1899). In 1903 he worked as an assistant for Berlin’s museums. On behalf of the German Oriental Society he published the wooden sarcophagi from the excavations in Abusir, Egypt. His second doctoral thesis dealt with Greek wooden sarcophagi from the times of Alexander the Great (1905).

Watzinger came from Berlin to Rostock in 1905 as a Professor for Classical Archaeology. It was around this time that Watzinger published the Schumacher finds from Megiddo. From September 1907 to January 1908, Watzinger worked in the Galilee. In a letter of January 6, 1908 the government of Mecklenburg’s grand duke allowed Watzinger a special vacation to participate in Sellin’s excavation at Jericho.

It was not until October 1908 that Sellin was appointed to the chair of Old Testament at Rostock University. Some scholars assume that Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger met for the first time in Rostock. This is not true. Their cooperation is bound to have started prior to this date, due to their common connection with the German Oriental Society. Rostock constituted just a short common period of activity for Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger. Both taught together from 1908 until 1909 in Rostock and excavated in Jericho. Afterwards their ways separated.

Watzinger was appointed in 1909 to the chair of Classical Archaeology at Giessen and in 1916 at Tübingen. Watzinger worked successfully for 32 years in Tübingen. It was in 1929 that Watzinger published the Schumacher finds from Megiddo. Unfortunately, he was so involved in his own projects, that he didn’t have time to work with anyone else.
The collaboration of Sellin and Watzinger was harmonious and constructive in their few years together at Rostock and Jericho. Sellin took a teaching position in 1913 at Kiel and then in 1921 at Berlin. He headed the excavations at Tel Balatah, the site of biblical Shechem, in 1913-1914 and 1926-1927. Then in 1928, because of archaeological and methodological problems, the German Archaeological Institute assigned Gabriel Welter instead of Sellin as director for the Shechem excavation. Welter was a good classical archaeologist but he had less talent for thorough publication of his finds. The cooperation with Sellin proved to be problematic because of Welter’s poor commitment to the archaeological work at Shechem. He was occupied at various other sites in Greece at the same time.

In the opinion of W.F. Albright, true excavational work in Palestine began with Sellin’s excavation in Jericho and G. A. Reisner’s work in Samaria. Ernst Sellin’s achievement for German biblical scholarship can be seen most of all in his pioneering of the integration of archaeology into biblical scholarship. He had started this important approach in Vienna. But Rostock brought him into constructive association with Carl Watzinger and created a common peak of their careers with the excavation at Jericho.

The tradition of Ernst Sellin will be honored in Rostock by the publication of his biography by Ulrich Palmer in the year 2000. Sellin and his cooperation with Watzinger in Rostock formed one of the impulses for the Old Testament Institute at Rostock University to restart archaeological research after decades of delay. In 1995 it began in the region of Zorah and Eshtaol. Later (1996), it continued in the Galilee, and since 1998 at Megiddo in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. The main interest of the participants from Rostock is in the analysis of Megiddo’s role as both a royal and a regional center during the times of Israel’s emergence as a state.

Kathleen Mary Kenyon was born in 1906, the daughter of Sir Frederick Kenyon, the distinguished Biblical scholar and later Director of the British Museum, she read history at Somerville College, Oxford. Her first experience in the field was as photographer on the expedition led by Gertrude Caton-Thompson which carried out the pioneering excavation at Great Zimbabwe in 1929.

On her return to England, she joined Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler on their excavation at Verulamium (St. Albans). She worked there during the summers of 1930 to 1935, directing the excavation of the Roman theatre. In 1931-1934 she worked at Samaria with John and Grace Crowfoot. There she cut a stratigraphic trench across the summit of the mound and down the northern and southern slopes, exposing the Iron II to the Roman period stratigraphic sequence of the site. In addition to providing crucial dating material for the Iron Age stratigraphy of Palestine, she obtained key stratified data for the study of Eastern terra sigilata ware.

In 1934 she was closely associated with the Wheelers in the foundation of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London. From 1936-1939 she carried out important excavations at the Jewry Wall, Leicester. During the Second World War, Kenyon served as Divisional Commander of the Red Cross in Hammersmith, London, and later as Acting Director and Secretary of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London.
After the war, she excavated in Southwark, at the Wrekin, Shropshire and elsewhere in Britain, as well as at Sabratha, Libya. As a member of the Council of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, she was involved in the efforts to reopen the School. In January, 1951 she travelled to Jordan and undertook excavations at Jericho on behalf of the BSAJ. Her work at Jericho, between 1952 until 1958, made her famous. There she made ground-breaking discoveries concerning the Neolithic cultures of the Levant. In this period also she completed the publication of the excavations at Samaria. Samaria Sebaste III: The Objects, appeared in 1957. Then, from 1961 to 1967 she excavated in Jerusalem.

Another important aspect of Kenyon's career was her role as a teacher. From 1948 to 1962 she lectured in Levantine Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology. Her teaching, complemented by her excavations at Jericho and Jerusalem, which formed her 'field school', helped to train a generation of archaeologists, who went on to teach in Britain, Australia, Canada, the United States, Denmark and elsewhere. In 1962 she became Principal of St. Hugh's College, Oxford, and was thereafter deeply involved in both College and University affairs.

Garstang

Names of Hyksos leaders are found upon seals both in the tombs and the palace area of the city suggested that some of these personages both resided and died there............ A vast complex of store rooms came into being at that time............68 such store rooms were examines layer by layer down to their foundations............Quite a number of the jars had been sealed after the fashion of the age, in the name of Hyksos chieftains........ The whole system was destroyed 1600 BC by a general conflagration, an event which seemed to coincide with the demolition of the cities ramparts, though the evidence as to the date of the latter case is not so complete as to warrant a definite conclusion..........Further extensive damage was done by a landslide, originating presumably in an earthquake which broke one of the main walls in two and brought the brickwork of this and other walls toppling down in large masses.

Ain Ghazal

Statues from the Neolithic period were found at ‘Ain Ghazal in central Jordan in 1983. The site was initially discovered during the building of a new road in the 1970’s on the north-east outskirts of Amman.214

‘Ain Ghazal measures approximately thirty acres. The site was occupied for more than 2000 years as a farming village. It was founded around 7250 B.C.E. in the pre-pottery Neolithic B period and was abandoned around 5000 B.C.E.
The statues were recovered from a single, self-contained deposit buried with reasonable care in a flat-bottomed pit in a cluster of buildings. The statues were on top of two superimposed plaster floors, but the cache appears not to have been in direct stratigraphic association with any structure.

The statues have been divided into two categories according to their size: the smaller, a little over one foot in height, are referred to as ‘Dumpies’. The larger, approximately three feet in height are known as ‘Figures’. The dumpies consist of a solid base representing the torso which may be partly shaped but with little detail and usually no decoration, while the figures are larger with definite arms and legs. All heads have been made with a great attention to detail and eyes, nose, mouth and ears are all depicted clearly. The eyes are elliptical in shape and, where they survive, the irises are round and differ in diameter from statue to statue. The noses are very pronouncedly retroussé with the nostrils depicted as two incised lines, while the mouths are a simple horizontal slit. The ears are present as small protuberances often with a small central depression roughly impressed in them.

A rescue operation was mounted under the supervision of Kathryn Walker Tubb which entailed lifting the cache of statues intact and removing them safely from site. A traditional block-lift method was used in which the cache was isolated on a pedestal of earth, covered with aluminum foil and packaged using polyurethane foam to cushion it and lock it in position within a pre-constructed wooden crate.

The cache was then detached from the pedestal of earth by undercutting it and was then inverted. This side was then foamed into position after the removal of the pedestal and a lid secured in place. The cache was subsequently transported to the conservation laboratories at the Institute of Archaeology for further treatment.

The ultimate aim of the conservation process is the separation of the statues to ensure the stability of the individual pieces and to make available this unique collection for intensive study. Early work carried out included the excavation of soil from the exposed surface of the cache, examination of the technology of the statues, comparative typological studies, and the development of a treatment for the statues. Radiocarbon accelerator dates obtained from charcoal existing within the cache produced dates of 8660+/- 80 BP and 8700+/- 80 BP.

The presence of a second cache was suspected in 1984 when material similar to that of the first cache was observed to be eroding out of the vertical side of a terrace cut in a slope of the site to take bulldozer traffic during construction of the highway referred to above. Lifting could not be carried out until the following year and the exposed area was back filled to try to prevent deterioration in the intervening period. After excavation, the cache was transported to the Conservation Analytical Laboratory of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. The
conservation treatment on this material is now complete and 2 of the 6 statues were on display at the Sackler-Freer Gallery until early April 1997.

The statues had been made by modelling plaster made up of slaked lime, quartz and crushed calcareous filler on a bundle of reeds. This armature was reinforced using spun twine. Impressions of the organic material are clearly preserved on the interior surfaces of the lime plaster and their interpretation yields a wealth of technological information. The cores in the dumpies consisted of a simple bundle of reeds which extended down through the center of the bodies from half to three-quarters of their total heights leaving broad solid bases.

The cores of the figures were much more complex in their construction consisting of several bundles married together using twine to extend height and width. In both cases, the head and neck parts of the armature were reinforced by a close, continuous binding of twine. Evidence from the pit fill indicates the reeds extended through the base of the feet. These extensions could then have been embedded in the plaster floors, thereby securing the statues in a standing position.

Some statue surfaces were decorated with pigments: ochres, carbon black and a fine white lime plaster. The eyes were delineated using a bituminous putty as eyeliner, the same material was also used for irises. The eyeliner is further embellished in some cases with a green colored pigment called “dioptase”, a hydrated copper silicate.

The condition of the statues is due to the inherent nature of the materials used, the conditions during long term burial and lastly and more recently, to the disruption to the site during the highway construction.

The plaster varies in the extent of its fragility from extremely fragile to relatively sound. It is seen that where the plaster of adjacent statues has been in intimate contact, not separated by even a millimeter of pit fill, presumed cycling of the calcium carbonate between carbonate and bicarbonate in response to moisture in the burial environment has resulted in the formation of a natural cement.

The bundles of reeds are completely deteriorated now, and so not only is the support they imparted missing, the resulting voids render the statues far more vulnerable. The voids have either all but disappeared as a result of compression caused by the overburden of soil or are filled with a free flowing silt. Where the front and back of the statues have compacted, the plaster is virtually pulverized or has achieved a new shape through the myriad of fine cracks.

The cache was found approximately five feet below a terrace cut to allow the movement of construction vehicles and bulldozers along the side of the new road being built. The vibration
and weight generated by the machinery was partially dispersed by the intervening occupation debris: however, the resultant crushing, cracking and breaking of the objects was severe.

During treatment, evidence of pre-depositional damage has been found. The irises and pupils in the eyes of the statues are often missing and, in no case are the fronts of feet in alignment. Whether this can all be attributed to wear and tear sustained in their primary location or whether it was this movement from their primary location for deposition in the pit that incurred the damage is unclear. It is most likely that both factors contributed to the damage. Although most of the statues were virtually intact when buried, one, at least, must have been a jumble of fragments; two heads were broken in half and located in different positions in the pit and a few bodies with missing heads and vice versa are present. It is possible that headless bodies and bodiless heads may marry up as conservation proceeds.

The consolidation system was chosen, among other reasons, for its ability to impart strength to the decayed plaster, to reach a reasonable depth of penetration and to allow re-treatment at a later date should this be required. Consolidation was carried out using an acrylic-silane mixture. Initially the silane (Dow Corning Z6070 a methyltrimethoxy silane) alone was applied gradually across the surface of the statue using a pipette. Care was taken not to wet the plaster too much as this could result in smearing and therefore loss of surface detail. An acrylic and low molecular weight silicone mixture (Racanello E55050) was added to the silane in increments of 3, 5, 7, 10, 15 and 20% in order to confer greater strength to the plaster than the silane alone.

In areas where the plaster was extremely crushed, later applications of Paraloid B-72 (an acrylic co-polymer) of varying concentrations in toluene, have been applied directly to the surface as required to maintain cohesion of the plaster crumbs.

Support for the pieces of the individual statues was necessary during the separation and lifting procedure in order to preserve the pattern of alignment and so make reconstruction easier. Strips of an acid free Japanese tissue were attached to the previously treated surfaces using polyvinyl alcohol as the facing adhesive, which showed no adverse reaction to later silane application on the reverse. Further strapping was applied, where necessary, using masking tape over the surfaces protected by the facing.

Cleaning of previously unexposed surfaces was carried out using hand tools, under the microscope, prior to their acrylic-silane consolidation. Reconstruction was carried out and joins were created using Paraloid B-72 in acetone, as the adhesive. The statues, where possible were rebuilt around a new bundle of Perspex rods. The spaces around the rods were packed with cotton wool to provide a tight and supportive structure. Any gaps which required filling for support and/or the aesthetic integrity of the piece was undertaken using a variety of material called BJK dough (a mixture of a synthetic resin, jute and kaolin, mixed with five solvents to produce a putty) and fine vinyl based calcium sulphate spackles. These areas of infill were toned in using either acrylic paints or dry powder pigments with an acrylic binding medium.

Inauguration of Joshua at Jericho (Josh 5:13—6:27)
Creation of the New Jerusalem (Ezek 40:1--48:35)

Story of the ‘Adam as a Man and a Woman (Gen 2:20-24)

The mixture of bone and blood, and the mixture of bone and clay in the plastered heads at Jericho.

Covenant between Yahweh and Israel (Exod 19:1—Lev 27:34)

The tradition of honoring one’s father and mother (Exod 20:12) may be reflected in the skulls.
Further Reading

Rollefson, G.O.

Tubb, K.W.

Tubb, K.W.

Tubb, K.W and Grissom, C
The religion of ancient Israel develops by both convergence, and by differentiation. Convergence is the assimilation of the characteristics of other divine patrons by Yahweh. Differentiation is the alienation of the characteristics of other divine patrons.

Yahweh assimilates the sun (xxiv)

The publication of Hadley's 1989 dissertation on Asherah is a welcome contribution to the debate sparked by the Ugaritic texts and fanned into flames by the inscriptions from Khirbet el Qom and Kuntillet Ajrud. Its primary contribution is Hadley's careful and thorough analysis of the latter texts together with other archaeological evidence, epigraphic and artifactual. Since earlier versions of the chapters on Qom and Ajrud have been available for some time, the major value of this work for those without specialized interest will likely be found in its comprehensive scope and engagement with a broad range of scholarship, evidenced in a 25-page bibliography as well as Hadley's constant interchange with many of the works cited there. Thus the volume serves as a compendium of a half century of debate on the meaning and identity of Asherah/asherim. For Hadley, the central question in that debate is signaled by the title's allusion to R. Patai's 1967 work, *The Hebrew Goddess*. It is the cult of Asherah, as a Hebrew goddess, that drives her investigation.

Hadley begins (Chap. 1) with an introduction to the question, "What/who is asherah?" as posed by the biblical texts, followed by a history of scholarship represented by the ten dissertations and three broader studies that preceded her own. The base line, unfortunately, is closer to the date of
the dissertation than the publication, with the result that C. Frevel’s major work of 1995 is represented only by a summary of contents and no account is taken of T. Binger's 1991 dissertation, published in 1997. Chapter 2 treats the Ugaritic evidence for the goddess and considers questions of origins and etymology. Hadley endorses the view of Athirat’s Amorite origins and role as consort of the chief deity (Amurru in the Babyonian texts, El at Ugarit), suggesting, however, that her status and role in relation to El and Baal were in flux at Ugarit. She finds birth and fertility associations in epithets from Ugarit and in an identification with Qudshu of the Egyptian relief depicting a naked goddess.

Chapter 3 treats the evidence of the HB, highlighting its complexity in pointing both to a "humanly made, carved wooden object" and to a goddess. Hadley proposes to explain this complexity by the thesis that "the term "asherah" [originally the cult object of the deity] [was] in the process of losing its identity with the goddess and becoming merely the wooden object" (p. 62). While she believes that Asherah was still worshipped as a goddess during the monarchy, she argues that "perhaps by the time of dtr, and certainly the Chronicler, the term had ceased to be used with any knowledge of the goddess whom it had originally represented, and from whom it received its name" (pp. 62-63). The bulk of the chapter is devoted to examining this thesis in the handful of passages that "may mention the goddess," unfortunately without reproducing the Hebrew text (although the Vulgate is cited in full for 1 Kgs 15:13).

The remainder of the book is devoted to the archaeological evidence, with detailed analysis of the inscription from el Qom (Chap. 4), the finds from Ajrud (Chap. 5), other related finds (Chap. 6), and female figurines (Chap. 7). Photographs and line drawings accompany the discussion, and detailed descriptions of sites and artifacts. Here Hadley's personal observations contribute a significant element, but, as in her treatment of the biblical texts, most of the discussion consists of reporting and weighing other scholars' views. Although Hadley rules some interpretations untenable (such as the view that asherah is simply an object), her tendency to qualify every judgment leaves unclear at times just where she comes down on an issue. Tentative formulation does not, however, obscure her views on the Ajrud Pithos. "The inscription probably refers to the wooden image of the goddess," she concludes, and "it is probable . . . that Asherah is represented on the pithos, but by her symbol of a tree, and not as a goddess" (p. 154). Hadley finds dual representation of Asherah as naked goddess and stylized tree on the Taanach cult stand, and suggests that the pillar figurines with exaggerated breasts "may be smaller copies of the asherah poles . . . in the temple of Jerusalem" and elsewhere (p. 205).

No sampling of Hadley's views can do justice to the full riches of this book, which is now an indispensable resource on a topic that will remain a subject of debate. Individual scholars will take issue with particular judgments, and some may get lost in the maze of arguments, but the work is filled with acute observations and suggestive proposals that invite further reflection and discussion.

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Chapter 28

Deities in Israel in the Period of the Judges

Yahweh and Asherah

The Taanach cult stand has symbols of both Asherah and Yahweh. Asherah is represented by a naked female flanked by two great lions and a tree. Yahweh is represented by a bull and the sun.

Asherah entered the divine assembly of ancient Israel only after the formation of the state (1000 B.C.E.). Likewise, Yahweh as the sun was also “The monarchic solar imagery for Yahweh seems to be strictly a southern development, a special feature of the royal Judean cult.” (20) “In Israel it appears to have been a special feature of the southern monarch, since the available evidence is restricted to Jusah; it is not attested in the northern kingdom.” (120) Yet the Elijah Stories are a northern tradition, and twice – on Carmel, and in the chariot of the sun – Yahweh appears as the Sun.
Chapter 29

Yahweh and the Sun
(115-124)

In Assyria, Babylon and Ugarit, the sun was the creator who could be seen by all creation. (120). Like Ningirsu, Assur and Marduk, Yahweh was both the sun and the storm. The Elijah who snatches both lightening and sun shine from Yahweh reflects this same motif. The books of Kings (2 Kgs 23) and the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 8) consider worship of the sun to be idolatry.

**Annals of Josiah** (2 Kgs 22:1--23:30)

**Death of the First Born of Rome** (Rev 15:1--16:21)
Further Reading

Ringren

Israelite Religion: 62, 97-98.
Chapter

Mesopotamia, Land of the Euphrates and the Tigris

From Mesopotamia, the Hebrews learned **law and order**. Mesopotamians were fascinated with due process. From Code of Ur-Nammu (2112-2095 BCE) to the Code of Hammurabi ((1792-1750 BE), the people of Mesopotamia honed their skills in conflict resolution.
Further Reading


According to webmaster: Robert I. Bradshaw, B.Sc., C.D.R.S., “The inspiration for this site grew out of the interest generated by my first site, Creationism and the Early Church Home Page, which indicated that there is a demand for detailed and well-written articles on biblical subjects on the Internet. Biblical Studies.org.uk is a bibliography which appeals to the amateur interests of the webmaster.
Chapter

Hattusas, Land of Covenant

From the Land of Hattusas, the Hebrews learned **covenant**. The Hittites were master diplomats, whose strategy for preventing war and negotiating peace became a model which the Hebrews used to understand Yahweh.

The city of Hattusas is huge, dwarfing the other Late Bronze Age citadels. The city wall extends some four miles. There are temples and palaces, the royal archives and the Lions Gate. The Great Temple of Hattusas is dedicated to the divine patron of the weather and the sun in the Lower City.

Before Hattusas became the capital city of the Hittite empire it was a trading post for the empire of Assyria. It was destroyed by Anitta, ruler of Kushar. His descendant, Hattusili, founded a great city on the site after 1700 B.C.E. From 1450 B.C.E. the Hittite Empire was matched only by Egypt.

Soon after 1200 B.C., Hattusas fell to the Sea Peoples, a coalition of marauding peoples who swept across the eastern Mediterranean, reaching the Nile Delta where they fought the armies of Rameses III about 1186 B.C.E. The ruins of Hattusas visible today, exposed by years of excavations by German archaeologists, mostly date to the city's highpoint.
Chapter

Jerusalem

Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Above the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there is a short ladder just below one of the windows. It rests on a ledge that spans the arches above two doorways built by the Crusaders in the 12th century. \(^{215}\)
Conclusions

“New biblical archaeology” emerges into the twenty-first century with a very different mission statement than the “biblical archaeology” that dominated most of the twenties-century. A first assumption for new biblical archaeologists archaeology does not proof the Bible, and the Bible does not interpret the material remains in Iron Age Syria-Palestine. A second assumption is that a lack of evidence supporting an interpretation of the Bible in Judaism, Christianity or Islam is not evidence to the contrary. The lack of evidence does not proof that what the Bible says is wrong. A third assumption is that archaeology is not an argument for faith or against faith. Finding the bones of Jesus in Israel today would not disprove Christian faith in the resurrection of Jesus. A fourth assumption is that the validity of any interpretation in either biblical studies or archaeology needs to be based on the internal coherence of the interpretation, not on the correspondence between the two disciplines. And fifth and finally, in the new biblical archaeology archaeology and biblical studies compliment and supplement one another. They seldom intersect.

Archaeology does not prove the Bible, the Bible does not interpret Archaeology

No evidence is not evidence

Archaeology cannot create or destroy faith

Researchers say they have found caskets from a 1st-century tomb near Jerusalem that bear the names Joseph, Mary and Jesus, son of Joseph. But archeologists say the find is probably a coincidence.

The oblong limestone caskets, which contained no bones, were excavated in 1980 from a building site near Jerusalem. They were rediscovered two weeks Ago (1996) by researchers for a television program, and found to have come from the same tomb.

"There is no proof that these belonged to the Holy Family, but the combination of names is interesting," said Ray Bruce, director of the independent television company CCTV, which produces "Heart of the Matter" for the British Broadcasting Corp.

What would happen to the faith of Christians if archaeologists found the bones of Jesus? THE NOW-FAMOUS burial box, thought by some scholars to have once held the bones of James, the brother of Jesus, will hopefully be displayed at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) November 16 - December 29 -- in conjunction with a major archaeology conference.

The first-century ossuary features an Aramaic inscription which reads: "Yakov (James), son of Yosef (Joseph), brother of Yeshua (Jesus)." It was recently shipped to the ROM;
unfortunately, upon its arrival, the limestone box was discovered to have several cracks. However, ROM officials are hoping to repair the box in time for the exhibit.

The ROM was asked to host the exhibit because several Bible-related organizations are holding conferences in Toronto this month. The groups involved are the Society for Biblical Literature; the American Schools of Oriental Research; and the Biblical Archaeology Society.

The latter organization is sponsoring the most ambitious of the conferences. 'Bible and Archaeology Fest V' will proceed November 22-24 at the Metropolitan Hotel, featuring more than two dozen notable experts on biblical archaeology.

Several presentations promise to be of special interest to Christians, including: 'Current Issues of Jesus and Archaeology,' with Craig Evans of Acadia Divinity College; 'Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls: What We Can and Cannot Know 55 Years Later,' featuring Peter Flint of Trinity Western University; 'Modern Discoveries of Ancient Gospels: The Case of the Gospel of Peter,' with Bart Ehrman of the University of North Carolina; and 'The Killing of History: How Radicals Are Highjacking Archaeology and Biblical Studies,' by William Dever of the University of Arizona. Other noted scholars in attendance will include James Sanders, Eugene Ulrich and James VanderKam.

Some of the other topics will include: 'Until the Coming of the Messiahs: Qumran Rules at the Dawn of the Messianic Age'; 'At Home with the Goddess'; 'Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on Our Bible'; 'Lives of a Galilean Village: Cana'; 'What Alexander the Great Did To Us All'; 'Paul Was Not a Christian'; and 'Was Jesus an Essene?'

Controversy will also be present, in the form of John Dominic Crossan, one of the key figures of the ultra-liberal Jesus Seminar; Crossan will be featured in a question and answer session, at a banquet hosted by Biblical Archaeology Review editor Hershel Shanks.

There will also be a special presentation entitled 'The New Qumran Excavations,' covering the latest discoveries related to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Aramaic words etched on the box’s side show a cursive form of writing used only from about 10 to 70 A.D., according to noted paleographer André Lemaire of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (popularly known as the Sorbonne University) in Paris, who verified the inscription’s authenticity. The ossuary has been dated to approximately 63 A.D. Lemaire details his full investigation in the November/December 2002 issue of Biblical Archaeology Review, the leading popular publication in its field.

The Question of Jesus’ resurrection lies at the heart of the Christian faith. There is no form of early Christianity known to us that does not affirm that after Jesus’ shameful death God
raised him to life again.\textsuperscript{217} That affirmation is, in particular, the constant response of earlier Christianity to one of the four key questions about Jesus that must be raised by all serious historians of the first century. I have elsewhere addressed the first three such questions, namely what was Jesus’ relation to Judaism? What were his aims? Why did he die?\textsuperscript{1} The fourth question is this: Granted the foregoing, why did Christianity arise and take the shape it did? To this question, virtually all early Christians known to us give the same answer, “He was raised from the dead.” The historian must therefore investigate what they meant by this and what can be said by way of historical comment.

Coherence, nor correspondence is the criterion for validity in Archaeology and Biblical Studies

Archaeology and Biblical Studies compliment and supplement one another. They seldom intersect
Further Reading

Bible in a readable English translation:

Mazar, Amihai
1992  Archaeology in the Land of the Bible 10,000-586 B.C.E.

Mazar (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) provides a commonly accepted reconstruction of social world of Syria-Palestine from the Neolithic period beginning in 10,000 B.C.E. through the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. at the end of Iron Age II.
Links

http://www.historylink101.com/ancient_mesopotamia.htm
Chapter

Bests

Explanation of the Difference between “Biblical Archaeology” and the “Archaeology of Syria-Palestine”


Review of Books on Archaeology and the Bible for Lower Division Course


Textbook for a Lower Division Course


Explanation of the Wheeler-Kenyon Method


Explanation of How Archaeology Was Used to Write Histories of Israel


Day-in-the-Life Stories


**Studies on Households in Ancient Israel**


**Studies on Monotheism in Ancient Israel**

Smith, Mark

**Studies on Burials in Ancient Israel**


**Studies on Farming and Herding in Ancient Israel**

_____________. Every Living Thing: daily use of animals in ancient Israel. Walnut Creek: AltaMira, 1998.

**Rebuttal to the Minimalist/Copenhagen School**


A rebuttal of the work of Keith W. Whitlam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: the silence of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge, 1996. Whitlam argues that “histories” of Israel are not critical, academic works but simply summaries of the Bible and reflections of the personal prejudices or commitments of “historians” today. These histories are artificial reconstructions of worlds that the Bible and historians today wish had existed, but, in fact, never did.

**Rebuttal of the Social Theories of George Mendenhall and Norman K. Gottwald on the Origins of Israel**


Zevit reviews the archaeological evidence for six arguments in the work of Mendenhall and Gottwald, and finds it lacking altogether or contradictory. For Zevit ancient Israel is not a community of indigenous survivors of LB age wars who moved east away from the Coast Highway and into the hills of Judah.

1. LB Syria-Palestine could have seen a drop in population as a result of war, famine and herem as well as from the emigration of the village population into the hills of Judah.
2. Villages in the Hills of Judah were scattered, not organized into tribes.
3. Cities in Syria-Palestine were vacant for 100 years before being resettled as villages with new cultural conventions. If the Hebrews were indigenous, they would have rebuilt them sooner, and with the same cultural conventions.
4. The development of the villages in the hills of Judah moved from east to west, not west to east as Mendenhall and Gottwald have argued. For example, collar rim jars appear first in the east, then in the west.
5. Iron I pottery and LB pottery are not the same.
6. Iron I and LB stamp seals are not the same.
Chapter

Glossary

The glossary at AncientNearEast.net provides a comprehensive alphabetic listing of terminology relating to the archaeology, ethnology, culture and ancient history of the Near East and Egypt.
http://www.ancientneareast.net/glossary.html#carination

A
Androcentricism
Archaeology, household
Archaeology, palace
Archaeology, essentialist
Archaeology, gender

B
Ba
Bronze Period, Late
Bronze Period, Middle

C
Canopic jars

D
Diachronic

E
Emic interpretation
Essentialism
Ethnoarchaeology
Ethnobiology
Ethnography
Etic interpretation

F

G
Gender
Gender attribution
Gender role

H
Heterarchy

I
Ishthar
Isolation and reassemblage technique

J

K
Ka
Kinship

L
M

N
Naos

O
P
Phenomenology

QR

S
Sex
Synchronous

T
Endnotes

1 “Military Brats Registry” http://www.military-brats.com/

2 National Geographic http://nationalgeographic.com/

3 The Legends of Genesis. 1901.

4 Prolegomena to the history of Israel. With a reprint of the article, Israel, from the Encyclopedia Britannica.

5 The Heroic Legends of Denmark. 1919.


9 www.fadum.com

10 Morten Fadum, Even Poets Dance. Chapter 1.


12 Linguist and archaeologist B S J Isserlin died on October 23 2005. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, he became head of Semitic studies at Leeds in 1961 and held the post until he retired in 1981. His work included excavations in North Africa, the Near East and at sites in the UK. He was also involved with sites in Israel but his 'crowning achievement' was the excavations in the Phoenician site in Motya between 1955 and 1972 which led him to draw original conclusions about the cultute of the Phoenicians and their activities around the Mediterranean.


14 Throughout, “Syria-Palestine” refers to the geographic region often called “Canaan”, the “Levant” or, simply, “Palestine”. The use is patterned on the use of “Syro-Palestinian” by archaeologists.

15 Vauhghn and Killebrew 2003: 2

16 Vauhgn and Killebrew 2003:2-3

17 The exodus in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy which moved from east to west may have been harmonized with the exodus in the book of Isaiah where the people of Judah migrate east to west from Babylon to the land of Judah.

18 Ashkelon Excavation Homepage (Harvard University) http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/ashkelon_dig.html

19 The Beth Shean Valley Archaeological Project: Tel Rehov Excavations (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) http://www.rehov.org/

20 http://www.jewfaq.org/shabbat.htm

21 http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/tawheed/conceptofgod.html

22 http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dv3-40

23 Adonis, Attis, Osiris 1906


27 Wiley and Phillips, 1958:2

28 Philip Phillips, "American Archaeology and General Anthropological Theory" (Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 11: 246-250): ‘“New World archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing’
30 “Archaeology as Anthropology” (1962) ; New Perspectives in Archaeology (1968).
31 Trigger, 1989:148
32 Binford 1965:196
33 White, 1959:8
34 Trigger, 1989:289
35 Trigger, 1989:295
36 Willey and Phillips, 1958:5
37 Watson 1991:267
38 Lyotard, 1984
39 Hodder 1986
40 Ian R. Hodder’s publications include: The Present in the Past (1982), Reading the Past (1986), The Domestication of Europe (1990), and Theory and Practice in Archaeology (1992).
41 Trigger 1989:379
42 Trigger 1989:38
43 Trigger 1984:615
44 J.P. Dessel, “In Search of the Good Book: a critical survey of handbooks on biblical archaeology”, 2003: 67-98 by catalogues and critiques books on archaeology and the Bible that have appeared since Albright.
45 Alhstrom 1994:10
46 Niels Peter Lemche, “Conservative Scholarship-Critical Scholarship: Or How Did We Get Caught by This Bogus Discussion” http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Conservative_Scholarship.htm
49 Laughlin 2000:2
53 Fuchs 1985; Exum 1983
54 Bal 1988
55Lisa J. LeCount (University of Alabama) http://www.as.ua.edu/ant/courses/ANT603.pdf
56 Ancient Near East .Net (http://www.ancientneareast.net/israel.html) is a gateway site for archaeological sites in the Ancient Near East.
57 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/dinur/links/Archaeology.htm)
58 www.accd.edu/.../ arts1303/Neolith1.htm

http://www.answers.com/topic/natufian-culture

The Scottish Crannog Centre: http://www.crannog.co.uk

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_489000/489449.stm

http://www.gurupedia.com/m/mi/microlith.htm

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Texas Beyond History: the virtual museum of Texas cultural heritage. The University of Texas at Austin. College of Liberal Arts. www.texasbeyondhistory.net/gallery.html


Past: the newsletter of the prehistoric society. University College London, Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY www.ucl.ac.uk/prehistoric/past/past30.html


http://unix.temple.edu/~phansell/65online/lect8.htm


The term "medieval" comes from the Latin meaning "middle age." The term was introduced into English in the 19th century, a time when there was heightened interest in the art, history and though of the Middle Ages. There is some disagreement about when the Medieval Period started, whether it began in the 3rd, 4th, or 5th century AD. Most scholars associate the beginning of the period with the collapse of the Roman empire, which began in 410 AD. Scholars similarly disagree about when the period ends, whether they place the end at the start of the 15th century (with the rise of the Renaissance Period), or in 1453 (when Turkish forces captured Constantinople).

Nahal Oren is 6 miles south of Haifa. The first excavations at Nahal Oren were in 1941. Remains of Natufian culture were found. The change from gazelle to goat herding may have been due to the feeding habits of the more adaptable goat compared with the selective diet of the more environmentally restricted gazelle. The recovery of wheat from so early a context is unexpected, buy it is uncertain whether the wheat found at the site was cultivated. Nahal Oren was repeatedly occupied over thousands of years by culture after culture. The habitation was predominantly external to the cave. The cave occupation was relatively slight. The economic potential of Nahal Oren was low. The site territory was not of exceptional productivity such as would automatically encourage primitive sedentary occupation. Neither does the site potential under a hunter-gatherer economy appear to have been so high that it would have been an exceptionally valuable hunting site. The rarity of grain at the site and the unsuitable nature of the site territory for grain agriculture suggests that grain growing was not an important aspect of the economy. The principal evidence for the food supply is overwhelmingly of gazelle bones. The high percentage of immature animals indicates domestication.

Beisamun is an important Neolithic site founded around 7000 B.C.E. The site lies on the west side of the upper Jordan Valley on the shores of Lake Hula. It covers an area of about 30 acres, but the archaeological deposit is only
2.5 ft thick! There are rectangular stone-walled houses with plaster floors which were widely spaced along the lakeside. One of these had two rooms with a hearth and the remains of two plastered skulls and several secondary burials beneath its floor. One of the skulls belonged to an adult female.

Yiftahel is an important Pre-Pottery Neolithic B site near the northern coast of Israel. Large rectangular houses found at the site show evidence of an advanced knowledge of the use of lime-based plaster production. The site was abandoned at the end of the PPNB. Recently, Yiftahel was re-excavated. Yiftahel was dated by C¹⁴ samples to the Middle PPNB. One hafted tool was uncovered in the course of a salvage excavation at Yiftahel. In a brown soil that covered the plaster floor of the rectangular room, a fragment of a hafted sickle, composed of a bone shaft and a flint blade, was found. The haft was made of a rib shaft fragment of Bos primigenius sp. It was preserved to a maximum length of 3½ inches; its maximum width is 1½ inches. The blade was rectangular in shape, feather head molded, with a truncated proximal end. Few remains of gloss were visible by regular microscope.

Hebrew names, in place of Arabic names, originated in June 1949, when Israel’s War of Independence ended and David Ben-Gurion established the Committee for Assigning Hebrew Names in the Negev. The committee assigned Hebrew names to 561 mountains, valleys, springs, and waterholes. The Bible, of course, was the main resource. Seil Imran (“The Channel of the Wool-Makers”) became the similar-sounding Nahal Amram, after the father of Moses and Aaron. Jabal Haruf (“Mountain of the Ewe”) became Har Harif (“Sharp Mountain”), even though it still looks more like a lowly sheep then a pointy peak because it sounds the same. Jabal Ideid (“Sprawling Mountain”) was renamed Har Karkom (“Mount Crocus”), because crocuses grow in the Negev.

The sites in the Uvda Valley were excavated by O. Yogev and U. Avner on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority.


"Throwing" derives from the Old Saxon term "to twist". “In the case of Neolithic pottery from ancient Jericho, it has been demonstrated that the potters used kilns and not open fires for pot making”. ABD 1992:v, 429.


Treasures of the Holy Land: ancient art form the Israel Museum 1986: 44-46

According to Michael Roaf, Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East, 1991: 45, “…scenes do not accurately depict a hunt but probably had some symbolic function, perhaps showing a festival that included dancing and animal baiting such as Minoan bull jumping or Spanish bullfighting.”


http://ancientneareast.tripod.com/86.html
A special treatment of the human figure is attested in the seventh millennium-the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B at Jericho (fig. zo) and Nahal Hemar and at Fin Ghazal in Jordan. Almost five-size statues and busts were made of chalky clay built up around an inner framework of reeds (see cat. no. S). The limbs and main features of the body were modeled, with details added in paint. The figures are short and squat, with flat heads. The eyes are painted, outlined with bitumen, or inlaid with shells. Some statues seem to be arranged in family groups-male, female, and child-and at Ein Ghazal the busts are arranged in a semicircle around the statues. Among the most outstanding discoveries at Jericho was a series of plastered skulls and the fragments of large chalky-clay statues of humans. Parts of such statues, including the present head, were found in the 1930s; stylized busts came to light in the 1950s. These large statues were constructed on a framework of reeds, twigs, or rushes, which left their imprint on the inside. The mode of construction is similar to that employed in a group of statues and busts that have recently come to light in the excavations of a Neolithic village at Fin Ghazal in Jordan; some of these are complete, while others, including a foot with six toes, are fragments. Fragments have also been found in the Nahal Hemar Cave. These large chalky-clay figures of humans, often found in what seem to be family groups, perhaps indicate a new religious concept. They bring to mind the myths concerning the creation of man from dust or clay in Sumerian and later Near Eastern mythologies and especially in Genesis 2: 7: "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth."

This head and parts of the body of a plaster statue were found in the upper layers of what was later called the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period. The head, like the rest of the statue, was modeled in chalky clay; the surface was then made smooth by spreading fine chalk over it. The head is life-size, flat in the back and almost disk-shaped in profile. Part of the neck has been preserved. The eyes, arched eyebrows, high cheekbones, and small nose with nostrils marked by holes are modeled symmetrically and delicately. The small mouth is pinched out; a short line indicates the lips, and the lower lip protrudes slightly. The ears, represented by small projections, are set high up, in line with the forehead. The eye sockets are cut out with a sharp knife and inlaid, probably from the inside, with Mediterranean conches of a type common on the southern coast of Israel. A radial design of dark brown painted stripes starts on the forehead, extends down to the eyebrows, and covers the entire face. The stripes and the intervals are of uniform width. A similar symmetrical pattern-a radial design painted in several colors-appears on the stone mask from Nahal Hemar (cat. no. 6), though it does not cover the lower part of the face. One of the recently discovered statue heads from Ein Ghazal also has painted vertical stripes on the forehead and diagonal stripes on the cheeks. Beyond their decorative character, the significance of the overall designs is not clear and may well be cultic.

Institute of Archaeology, University College London (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/frontpage/tubb.htm)


Enoch did not die, but was taken up by Yahweh because of his righteousness. Between 300 BCE and 300 CE, many stories of Enoch developed celebrating his teachings about heaven (Ps 49:15; Ps 73:24; 1 Kgs 2:11). Like Noah, Enoch also "...walked with Yahweh."

For Kselman 1988:89 "...the recurring pattern of the standard genealogical notice is: 'A had lived X years when he fathered B [the firstborn male]; after B's birth A lived for Y more years and had other children. The whole lifetime of A was (X+Y) years; then he died." This pattern is altered twice. In v. 24 readers are told that Enoch, who "walked with God" (an expression of continuing service and constant performance of duty; (Gen 6:9; 24:40; 1 Kings 3:6; 2 Kings 20:3), "was no more"; and although this expression can mean death (Gen 42:13, 32; Jer 31:15), readers learn that "God took: Enoch (as he did Elijah in 2 Kings 2:9-10; cf. Ps 49:15)."

For Clifford and Murphy 1991:13: "Enoch at the end of the MT verse seems to be a floss; Enoch rather is the builder and Irad is the son after whom the city is named. Irad corresponds to Mesopotamian Eridu, the first antediluvian city according to the Sumerian King List (ANET 265)." For Kselman 1988:89 and most other commentators: "...[t]o Cain is attributed the building of the first city, an advance that will culminate in Genesis 11 in the building of a city that will challenge the supremacy of Yahweh."
For Speiser 1964: 35: “...the Mesopotamian king lists sometimes interrupt their statistics with ... incidental comment (sic) about a given entry; cf. the Khorsabad List (JNES 18 [1954], 210 ff.), which describes the first seventeen rulers as “dwelling in tents,” using an analogous participial form (line 10).”

For Clifford and Murphy 1991:13 "...[t]he 10-member linear genealogy [Gen 5:1-32 P] ending a group of three "executive" persons who act -- Shem, Ham, and Japheth -- resembles the seven-member linear genealogy of 4:17-22, which also ends in three executives -- Jubal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain." Interestingly, C ignores Naamah, the daughter of Lamech, which would create a group of four, not three in the seventh generation.

For Kselman 1988:89: "...Lamech, ...boasts of his vengeful reign of terror. This dark story of violence ends with a genealogy that moves from murderer to murderer; the framing of a genealogy by two acts that bring death [Cain's killing of Abel, and Lamech's killing of a man for wounding him] stands in contradiction to the genealogical record of the continued life of a family." In contrast, I consider Cain's action a sacrifice, and Lamech's words to be a statement of the conditions of retaliation, not a confession of murder.

Also, I translate the qal as a prophetic perfect here to emphasize certainty and to express a vivid future and views the actions as good as done. cf. Williams 1970: #165, who cites Num 17:27 (Eng 17:12), Isa 5:13.

For Hess 1992: i, 806 "...the verbal root qnh associates 4:1 with the genealogy of Cain in 4:17-24. In v 20 Jabal is described as the father of migneh (RSV ”[those who have] cattle”), which has a root similar to that of Cain. Cain reappears in the last-named figure of his line, Tubal-Cain.”

For Hess 1992:i,806 "...the name [Cain] may be found in the Hebrew qina, "song." This has the advantage of appearing in biblical Hebrew but lacks examples of a qatal noun formation such as the name Cain possesses... In Ugaritic ...[`Na'amah'] may mean `song.'" In the story itself, however, Na'amah is associated with metal working, not with music.

For Gen 4:3 to be the beginning of a story, the initial verb should be a qatal. It is not. Hence the tradition of beginning the Stories of Cain and Abel in Gen 4:1 where the verb is a qatal is grammatically solid. See Joaquim Azevedo, “At the Door of Paradise: a contextual interpretation of Gen 4:7” Biblische Notizen 100 (1999): 46-47

For Azevedo 1999: 49 “In Gen 4:7 ...the protasis (negative) is found in the expected slot, but a nominal clause ...is introduced between it (the protasis ...)” but if you do not do right”) and its apodosis (..."then his desire will be to you and you will rule over him"). Functionally, that break (the nominal clause) implies an indirect imperative. In other words, "if you do not do what is right, fix it with the sacrificial offering lying at the door of Paradise, then his desire will be to you and you will rule over him again." Thus what ‘is at the door” is not a “snake”, but a lamb which can be offered as sacrifice of purification that will forgive his sin of having offered Yahweh an improper sacrifice of produce. If Cain sacrifices the lamb, he will regain his place as the first-born and “rule over” Abel.

There is a long-standing tradition of interpretation that sees Cain at fault for offering produce rather than a blood sacrifice. Yet, from a social scientific perspective, farmers like Cain would be expected to offer produce, and herders like Abel would be expected to offer livestock. Furthermore, there is no language in Gen 4:4:3-4 that shows Cain doing something wrong, or only Abel sacrificing correctly. Also the nesting of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, which is a produce sacrifice, and the Feast of Passover, which is a blood sacrifice, in the Stories of the Death of the Firstborn of Egypt would argue against seeing these two kinds of sacrifice in opposition to one another here.

For Norman K. Gottwald, The Hebrew Bible – a socio-literary introduction. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985: 8-9: “The first stage in the study of the Hebrew Bible was basically religious in a confessional sense. Jews and Christians studied scripture to give understanding and shape to the practice of their religions. In both communities, until the last two centuries, there was a solid consensus about the religious role of the Bible. It was believed to be the divinely revealed foundation document of their faith. From the close of the first Christian century until the Jewish Enlightenment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, orthodox Rabbinic Judaism interpreted the Tanak through the norms of the Oral Law or Talmud, and this “normalized” view of the Bible held sway among Jews without
serious challenge…. From the late second Christian century until the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, orthodox Catholic Christianity adopted a similar normalized interpretation of the Old Testament, as viewed by the New Testament and church dogma. Protestantism in its various branches soon fell into dogmatic interpretations of the Bible. Departures from the normative religious readings of the Hebrew Bible were a threat that might be tolerated, as in the case of mystics, or more often had to be expelled, as in the case of heretical sects.”

Humphreys 1985: 81 and others continue this tradition of interpretation.

For Kselman 1988:89: "...J ...parallels[s] ...advances in civilization and technology with the increase of violence."

For David W. Cotter, Genesis. Collegeville: Liturgical Press: 40-41: “Although Genesis 2-3 describe a transgression against a divine command and so become the biblical basis for the later Christian doctrine of Original Sin, the word “sin” only appears for the first time in Genesis 4 (hatta’ї, Gen 4:7 in a passage famously difficult to translate).” -- “...sin is lurking at the door” (NRSV)

For example, Boadt 1990: RG 59 summarizes the importance of the Stories of Cain and Abel for the Yahwist tradition as: "...even the children sin but God continues to care."

So Kselman 1988:89 and others. Cassuto, Genesis, 1: 178-96 notes that the divine names appear 70 times in Gen 2-4: “Elohim” 40 times, “Yahweh Elohim” 20 times, and “Yahweh” 10 times with the 70th occurring in the verse: "...at that time people began to call on the name of Yahweh.” So Brichto 1976:121.

For van Wolde 1991:26, “In Gen 4:1-16 the deity is no longer called Elohim, as in Genesis 1, nor YHWH Elohim as in Genesis 2-3, but YHWH. In Genesis 1, Elohim is the creator who creates all forms of life. In Genesis 2-3, YHWH Elohim is both creator and the one who makes contact with human beings. There are good reasons to believe that within the compound YHWH Elohim, Elohim represents the dimension of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3.5; 3.22), and YHWH the dimension of eternal life. To put it differently: in Genesis 2-3, Elohim corresponds with the tree of knowledge and YHWH corresponds with the tree of life…. As a compound, YHWH Elohim shows that YHWH and Elohim are linked inextricably to each other. That is why a single linguistic sign can represent both creation and relation, transcendence and immanence. After YHWH and Elohim have been inextricably linked in Genesis 2-3, YHWH can (from Gen 4:1 onwards) appear alone, independently, while embodying the characteristics of both YHWH and Elohim.”

For Radday 1990: 87:

"...[t]hat the Torah ...wished to ascribe the fratricide to a clash of material interest in unthinkable: it is not a History of Economy. That one sacrifice was more acceptable than the other is likewise incredible, because neither of the brothers had been commanded by God to offer any sacrifice at all. That the story is meant to explain why there were nomads called Kenites after Cain, their hieros eponymos, is impossible, among other reasons because the very same Kenites were famous for their rock fortresses, whose presence denotes the opposite of a nomadic lifestyle. That the mark is a sign of recognition among desert dwellers is altogether inconceivable."

"And if we surmise with some scholars the vagrant Cain to be the mythical ancestor of all roaming tinkers and the inventor of their skill, we have only come back full-circle to the field of economy, which is of little interest to any biblical book, let alone the first few chapters of the Torah."

So, for example, Bruce Vawter, On Genesis: a new reading. Garden City: Doubleday, 1977: 94 “The Yahwist has used the story [of Cain and Abel] to illustrate the further alienation of man from God that inevitably follows after the first rebellion against the divine decrees. Man who will not respect the limits set on his existence by his Creator God will also not respect the limits set on his activity by the rights of his brother and fellow.”


114 Leon R. Kass, “Farmers, Founders, and Fratricide: the story of Cain of Abel.” *First Things* 62 (1966): 19-26 is an undocumented reflection on the Stories of Cain and Abel by a Professor of Social Thought at the University of Chicago. Using Hellenistic traditions and western European philosophy Kass, in general, agrees with the understanding of the death of Abel as a murder, and the motivation to be competition, jealousy or envy between siblings or between shepherds and farmers which results in the denial and destruction of radical human equality or brotherhood.


116 For Vawter 1977: 92 the phrase “Next she bore [Gen 4:2] has seemed to some to indicate that Cain and Abel were thought of as twin brothers, a conclusion which in turn caused them to institute parallels between this story and others such as the legend of Romulus and Remus.”


For Hess 1992: i, 806 "...[i]t also has literary connections with the preceding narratives of chaps 2 and 3 (Hauser 1980). For example, v 16 speaks of the Garden of Eden, mentioned in chap 3."

For Brichto 1976:121 "...the Cain and Abel episode must be seen as the culmination of the Eden story in chs 2 and 3, a single composition, allegory or fable, articulating J's anthropology and theology. Since the characters are symbolic and prototypical, the tale is timeless; the conventions of life, however, are those of ancient Israel."

For von Rad 1961:99-100 "This new narrative is very closely tied in v.1 to what has preceded."

For Ellen van Wolde, “The Story of Cain and Abel: a narrative study” JSOT 52 (1991): 25-41 the story of Cain and Abel “...stands on its own to a certain extent, is closely connected with Genesis 2-3. The story of Cain and Abel opens with the protagonists of Genesis 2-3: the man and his wife. The last verse of the story (4:16) indicates that the events described happened in the neighbourhood of the garden of Eden, where Genesis 2-3 took place. Not only does the correspondence in characters and scene point to coherence; similarities are also found on the level of sentences and themes.... Thus, Gen. 4.7b is remarkably similar to Gen 3.16b, and 4.11a looks very much like 3.17b. In both stories, moreover, the relationship between human and earth plays an important part. In addition, words in the opening verses of Gen 4:1-16...refer back to Genesis 2-3. It is clear from these examples that there is coherence or continuity between Gen 2-3 and 4:1-16.” See also: A. J. Hauser, “Linguistic and Thematic Links between Genesis 4:1-16 and Genesis 2-3” 1980.

For Vawter 1977:93 the Stories of Cain and Abel also tell “...of a temptation and ‘fall,’ though the crime in this case is murder and fratricide, rather than unlawful acquisition of esoteric knowledge. It too speaks of a banishment from God’s presence: the parallels between chapters 3 and 4 of Genesis are, in fact, more than several.”

Eissfeldt 1965:191: "...in iv.25 Seth does not appear originally to have been regarded as the brother of Cain, but as the sole son of the first human pair, just as Cain's genealogy in vi,1,17a,18-22, must surely be understood to mean that the whole of later mankind is to be traced back to him. The genealogies of Cain and of Seth are mutually exclusive, and cannot be assigned to the same narrative strand."

Eissfeldt reads Gen 4:25 as: "And Adam knew his wife...and she bore a son and called his name Seth... To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of Yahweh."

Bernhard W. Anderson, "Analytical Outline of the Pentateuch." In Martin Noth, A History of Pentateuchal Traditions, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972: 262-3, reflecting the work of most source critics, shows no Urgeschichte or primeval history in the Elohist (E) Tradition. According to Eissfeldt 1965: 191 "... E does not yet appear here [Gen. i-xi], but only begins at xv with the narrative of God's covenant with Abraham, and appears to have had no primeval history at all; for the efforts of Mowinckel [The Two Sources of the Predeuteronomic Primeval History (JE) in Gen. i-xi, 1937] and Holscher [The Beginnings of Hebrew historical writing, 1942] to demonstrate an E share in Gen i-xi may be regarded as without success."

Septuagint Greek version (LXX) reflects different traditions for the Stories of Adam and Eve, where the name for the creator is "Yahweh" and the Cain and Abel story, where the name for the creator is "Elohim." If this is not just a case where "...an Elohim has crept secondarily into the Yahweh stratum (Eissfeldt 1965:182)" and if the Cain and Abel story is distinct from the Adam and Eve stories then it may be E's primeval history.

Eissfeldt 1965: 194 considers Gen 2:4b--3:24 and Gen 4:1+17a+18-24 as part of the same story told by the Laity's Tradition (L). This is not a tradition of monarchs like J and E, nor the tradition of priests like P, but a tradition of ordinary people. They are nomads, not farmers and they regard The Creator as so much like humans that it is possible for humans to threaten god by their actions. At any rate, this separation into sources further supports reading the stories of Cain and Abel or at least Gen 4:3-16+17b+23-5:32 separately from the stories of Adam and Eve.
Each transaction was negotiated near the sheering site or the threshing floor and ratified at a sanctuary of the divine patron to whom the livestock and land belonged. The threshing floor was the site for distributing grain to the villagers. It became a metaphor for both the well being of the village and the administration of the law. In the stories of Ḡaquṭ from Ugarit, the ruler Dan-el sits at the threshing floor where widows and orphans come to him for help, just as Ruth goes to Boaz at the threshing floor for help (Ruth 3:6-13). See Matthews 1988:52-4.

For Hess 1992: i, 806 "...the text is silent as to how God made know this preference for Abel's offering. The same is true concerning the conversation of the two brothers, though this has not prevented the ancient versions from filling in this and other 'gaps' (EncMiqr 7:119-24)." For Hess 1992: i, 9 "...explanations which focus on the difference in the type of offering of Cain and Abel (Gunkel Genesis HKAT, 37; Skinner Genesis ICC, 105), or on the difference in their disposition, like those which emphasize the inscrutable choice of God (von Rad Genesis OTL, 104; Westermann Genesis 1-11 BKAT, 403-4), rely upon suppositions not explicit within the text. Nor is there any support for a rivalry between farmers and herdsmen (as disputed by Sarna 1970:28). Note that minḥah, ‘offering,’ can refer to a grain offering as well as a meat offering. The text makes a distinction between Abel's offering of the ‘first’ and Cain's offering of ‘some’ (Cassuto 1961: 206-7; Sarna 1970:29; Waltke 1986; Wenham Genesis 1-15 WBC, 103-4). In offering the firstborn, Abel's act parallels that of Israelite sacrifices in which the firstborn represent both that which belongs to God as well as the entirety of the flock. By giving the firstborn and the best of the animal (i.e., the fat), Abel would be understood as having given everything to God." Therefore, despite his explicit disagreement with the interpretive tradition that distinguishes the offerings of Cain and Abel, Hess ultimately seems to agree with it!

For Walter Brueggemann, Genesis. Atlanta: John Knox, 1982: 56: “Both brothers do what is appropriate. Both bring their best. Both had reason to anticipate acceptance. There is nothing to indicate that God must discriminate or prefer one to the other. There is no hint of rivalry or hostility. This is simply a family at worship.”

For Regina M. Schwartz, The Curse of Cain: the violent legacy of Monotheism. Chicago: University of Chicago 1997: 3 “This God who excludes some and prefers others, who casts some out, is a monotheistic God – monotheistic not only because he demands allegiance to himself alone but because he confers his favor on one alone. While the biblical God certainly does not always govern his universe this way, the rule presupposed and enforced here, in the story of Cain and Abel, is that there can be no multiple allegiances, neither directed toward the deity nor, apparently, emanating from him.” A similar interpretation is offered by Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, a commentary. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962: 100-101: “…each one honors God separately from the other… the difference in the life of both is not something external, but rather is so deep that it works itself out in distinctive action of religious practice. Cult belongs intimately to culture, and every culture gives birth to its own peculiar cult. Thus there was more than one altar!”

For von Rad 1962: 100 “Cultic interests do not move the narrator at all, and therefore he gives here a rather incidental report of the first sacrifice.”

Clifford and Murphy 1991:13 note:"[m]ost commentators believe Abel's offering was the choice part and Cain's was not, but the emphasis falls on Yahweh's inscrutable acceptance of one and not the other." I don't think either conclusion is warranted by the text. Abel's offering is not preferable to Cain, and there is no emphasis on in the inscrutability of Yahweh, simply the unpredictability of the land.

Humphreys 1985: 79.
Hallo 1987:3-14 provides a brief review of the standard theories of how sacrifice functions in traditional societies in general and Mesopotamia in particular. Contrary to the common practice of distinguishing between the Mesopotamian custom of offering sacrifices to feed the Gods and the Israelite custom of offering sacrifices to make peace or enjoy communion with Yahweh, H argues that originally both cultures offered sacrifice to authorize the eating of meat by human created as vegetarians. Subsequently both developed secondary purposes. Israel's aversion to anthropomorphic imagery for Yahweh diverged from the tradition of sacrifice as feeding.

Grammatically, it is in an unusual place at the end of the verse, which may indicate that it was part of an early commentary on the story.


For Hess 1992: i, 807 "...Driver (1946:158) suggests reading ht't trbs, 'sin will crouch,' with two taws expressed by a single one in an originally continuous Hebrew text without word divisions. Driver goes on to repoint the final phrase as a passive: 'And so you shall be ruled by it,' (we'atta timmesel-bah), rather that accepting it as it is and understanding an adversative waw, "but yet you may/should rule over it."

The only other occurrence of the unusual phrase: "Its instinct is to strike out at you" (Gen 4:7) occurs only one other place in the Bible where the woman fantasizes about making love in the Song of Solomon: I am my beloved's and his desire is for me.” (Song 7:11)
Van Wolde 1991:30-31 summarizes the scholarship on reading rabas as "serpent." "GKC (#145u) has called rabas in Gen 4.7 a 'substantival participle'. Recent dictionary articles such as that by Waschke (ThWAT, VI, 32) and KB (IV, 1102), and recent grammars such as Waltke-O'Connor (1989:205), in agreement with the commentaries of Westermann (1976:385) and Hamilton (1990:227), have (since) considered rabas a substantive....

"Rabas means 'to lie down', usually in relation to animals (BDB, 918, 'stretch oneself out, lie down, lie stretched out', Waschke in ThWAT, IV, 321-22, 'lagern, sich (nieder)legen; KB, 1102, 'lagern, lauern'). This lying mostly has a quiet or restful connotation, but sometimes a restless connotation. The first is the common connotation, used to describe a flock of sheep lying down (Gen. 29.2; Isa 13:2017:2; 27:10; Ezek. 34.14; Seph. 2.14), or to describe wild animals, especially lions, that lie down and nobody dares to wake, because they project some kind of threat (Gen. 49.9; Isa 13.21; Zeph 2.15). Waschke describes the latest results of research on rabas (up to 1990) and sees an opposition between the normal quiet connotation of rabas on the one hand and the occurred of rabas in four particular texts on the other hand: "Der bisher beschriebene Kontext des Verbs schient verlassen zu sein, wenn die "Urflut" (...Gen 49,25; Dtn 29,19) das Subj. "Sunde" (...Gen 4,7) oder der "Fluch" (...Dtn 29,19) das Subj. bilden' (ThWAT, 322). In these text rabas refers to the lying (cf. 'crouching') of a powerful phenomenon, which emanates threat. Perhaps the opposition between these two connotations is not as great as Waschke described it, because there is an analogy between the lying or crouching of the wild animals that gives rise to some threat and the threatening lying of the [flood and the plague]. The negative context of Gen. 4.7b determined by the world ['sin'] and the opposition with the positive context of 7a, as well as the link between ['sin'] and the word...'at the door', forces us to interpret rabas here in the second, more threatening meaning, possibly associated with wild animals."

In Hebrew rbs means to crouch. There is no other example in Hebrew of the stem being used as a noun, but is well known in Akkadian where rabisum means a demon.

For Clifford and Murphy 1991:13 notes: "...[a]s the literal transl. shows, Yahweh's response to the distressed (not "angry") Cain is extremely difficulty to understand and may be corrupt; all transla. are uncertain."

For Wood 1987:29-37, violence results from Cain as an archetype of the unaccepted Cain hating his lack of acceptance and being envious Abel as an archetype of the accepted. Psychologically, Cain and Abel are not two sons but one, and Cain-Abel is every human being. The “unaccepted part” of every human being hates rejection and is envious of the “accepted part”. Humans seek acceptance from both their parents, and their divine patrons. Woods uses the relationship of sacrifice to violence proposed by Rene Girard to interpret the stories of Cain and Abel as a universal psychological profile. W’s proposal assumes a well-developed sense of the interior person, but there is little evidence that the Bible is interested in the psychology of the individual or the development of the internal life of individual characters in the Bible. The anthropological basis for Girard's proposal is equally modern and psychological, rather than Mediterranean.

Many different folk traditions acknowledge the demon at the door. When grooms carry their brides over the threshold, they are not simply demonstrating that they will totally support them financially. Nor does the gesture simply prevent the woman from stumbling, which would be a sign that the marriage will not succeed. The ritual protects brides from the bite of the demon that would make it impossible for her to have children. Likewise, when children play "Crack! Crack!" those who step on an expansion joint or crack in a concrete sidewalk "...break their mothers' backs." Women with broken backs cannot carry children to term, therefore, their households will have no children. Both the groom and his children acknowledge the demon at the door by engaging in ritual labor, to demonstrate they have the physical ability to survive.

In Jewish households, there is often a mezuzah on the doorjamb. It is a small container which holds a tiny scroll on which is written the commandment: "Remember, O Israel you have only one God, only Yahweh is your Lord (Deut 6:4)." Everyone leaving the house kisses or at least touches the mezuzah to accept the labor of fulfilling all the stipulations of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel so that their households may remain fertile and enjoy the blessings of land and children. In Catholic households, there are often small containers of holy water attached to the doorjamb. When they leave the house, Catholics dip their hands into the water and make the sign of the cross.
over themselves, which is the Christian symbol of the labor or suffering which their baptism requires if they are to experience the blessing of the resurrection.

140 Bract 1976: 121 softens the impact of such a theology by seeing the story as describing two vassals before their king. "Two brothers are rivals for the favor a divine monarch. the one offered the finest gift he can make; the other's gift is of middling quality. When the king makes known his displeasure with the latter, he also informs him that he is free to make amends and achieve restoration to favor; he warns him, however, that freedom of will makes him vulnerable to the demonic temptation of wrongdoing. The admonition is all too prophetic: the offender who began with niggardliness to this master now moves from petulance to murder. In the murderer's response to the question as to his brother's whereabouts, the author provides an exquisite insight into the psychology of the immoralist: he is one who rejects responsibility for his fellow."

Free will is clearly a topic of interest in the Western Mediterranean cultures of Greece and Rome, but not in the Eastern Mediterranean cultures of the ancient Near East.

141 For Hess 1992: i, 807 "...Huffmon (1985) has suggested, the problem lies in the failure of Cain to investigate the reason for God's rejection of his sacrifice."


144 Since the farmer and the herder worked together, the audience would expect the farmer to be grateful for the herder during a crop failure. The herd was the farmers insurance. Therefore it would be unlikely that one would begrudge the other.

145 For Azevedo 1999: 48, Cain has forfeited his rights as the firstborn.

146 For von Wolde 1991:34-35 seeing also defines not only the relationship between Cain and Yahweh, but between Cain and Abel as well. “Cain’s speaking and looking are essential actions… (Gen 4.6-7), YHWH reproaches Cain for not looking at his weaker brother, but rather lying in ambush for him. Looking someone in the face and showing one’s face should be signs of a good relationship between Cain and is brother. …Cain never looks squarely at his brother, but the anger which takes hold of him causes him to glower at Abel in the way that a wild animal glowers, with head lowered, at the prey it wants to devour. In this way Cain’s speaking and looking are early images or signs of his subsequent behavior towards his brother Abel."

147 For van Wolde 1991:26, the parallel is between Yahweh's first action in Gen 4:1b,beta and Yahweh's last action in Gen 4:10-15. "The last action of YHWH, at the end of the story is exactly opposite to his first action... [Cain] is not only banished from the face of the earth, but also from the sight of YHWH himself. In his first creative action YHWH places Cain within his sight, in his later action Cain is banished away from his sight. In the first action Cain is put into a relationship with YHWH; in the last this relationship is all but broken off."

148 For Brueggemann 1982: 54-64, the conflict is not between farmers and herders, but between God and humans. Humans realize that their struggle with God is a struggle with one another. Humans cannot resolve their struggle with God without resolving their struggle with one another. Human conflict reflects divine conflict, and is caused by their conflict with God.
For Hess 1992: i, 10 "...Jesus' observation on the blood of Abel refers to the murder of Abel, which is interpreted as similar to that of a 'prophet'; and to that of a martyr, apparently due to its association with the worship of God (Hill Matthew NCBC, 315; Marshall, Luke NIGTC, 506; Legasse 1982; Fitzmeyer, Luke 20-24 AB, 946, 951)."

"The focus of Heb 11:4 is on the faith of Abel. He represents the first example of the righteous who are put to death for their faithfulness. In Heb 12:24 Abel's blood represents the murder of an innocent victim. It cries out for vengeance (Gen 4:10). The blood of Jesus could also represent the murder of an innocent victim. However, instead of a cry for vengeance, the blood of Jesus provides mercy before God (Le Deaut 1961: 30-36; Moffatt, Hebrews ICC, 163-65, 218-19; Hughes 1977: 453-57, 551-52)." Since the death of Jesus is considered sacrifice, rather than murder, it would perhaps be better to consider the death of Cain as sacrifice rather than murder. The difference between the two is that Jesus offers a self-sacrifice, while Cain offers a human sacrifice.


Van Wolde 1991:34 notes the connection between the farmer, the farmland and human blood, but argues that the blood of Abel that flows from the hand of Cain into the farmland breaks the link between farmers and their farmland. This severed relationship between Cain and Abel, and between the farmer and the farmland, breaks the relationship between the farmer with his divine patron.

152 Turner 1969: 166-203.

153 Levenson 1993

154 Burkert 1972.

155 Girard 1972.


Humphreys 1985: 79 parallels Gen 4:1-16 and Gen 22:1-19 in so far as in both "... extreme arbitrariness characterizes the actions of Yahweh. This element of the arbitrary, of a fate or a limit fixed or imposed by the gods which demands of human beings acceptance of something less than full realization of their potential, is one way of considering one pole of the tragic vision.... Even if most mortals appear willing and even eager to live within divinely prescribed limits, an occasional human figure will not. Then the potential for the tragic is present."

The New Testament comparisons between the death of Cain and the death of Jesus in the Letter to the Hebrews would certainly be enriched if both were considered acts of sacrifice.

For van Wolde 1991: 34-35, Cain here raises his head an prepares to strike Abel. Previously, van Wolde has argued, that Cain does not look Abel in the eye – human to human – but lowers his head like an animal hunting prey. At this moment Cain raises his head to kill. Although van Wolde does not make this connection, Cain imitates the snake against which Yahweh has tried to warn him. Just as the snake has waited at the threshold to strike Cain, Cain has waited in the field to strike Abel.
Abraham on Mt. Moriah and Cain and Abel, however, belong to different genres. Abraham on Mt. Moriah is an inauguration story, while Cain and Abel are creation stories. Likewise, the killings in each tradition serve very different purposes. In Abraham on Mt Moriah the sacrifice is an ordeal that puts Isaac at risk to determine whether Yahweh has chosen him or Ishmael as heir to the household of Abraham. In Cain and Abel the sacrifices feeds the soil to make it fertile.


For Clifford and Murphy 1991:14 “…Cain's reaction to God's circumscribing command is to hate his favored brother.”

Van Wolde 1991:35


For Clifford and Murphy 1991:13 “… the earth, which drank his brother's blood, becomes the instrument of the punishment by not yielding its fruit and by being the place on which Cain wanders.”

For Brichto 1976:121 "...fugitive and wanderer' [4:12], has overtones of neither fuggitivism nor nomadism; it is a hendiadys denoting one who is endlessly on the move."

For Brichto 1976:121 '...the condemned one's response is that the decree is equivalent to a death sentence.'

For Hess JQR 48 (1957): 208ff: "...the sign ('ot) given to Cain after the murder is not specified, but the narrator intends some means to make public the punishment due to anyone who kills the murderer."

Enoch did not die, but was taken up by Yahweh because of his righteousness. Between 300 BCE and 300 CE, many stories of Enoch developed celebrating his teachings about heaven (Ps 49:15; Ps 73:24; 1 Kgs 2:11). Like Noah, Enoch also "...walked with Yahweh."

For Kselman 1988:89 "...the recurring pattern of the standard genealogical notice is: 'A had lived X years when he fathered B [the firstborn male]; after B's birth A lived for Y more years and had other children. The whole lifetime of A was (X+Y) years; then he died.' This pattern is altered twice. In v. 24 readers are told that Enoch, who "walked with God" (an expression of continuing service and constant performance of duty; (Gen 6:9; 24:40; 1 Kings..."
"...the Mesopotamian king lists sometimes interrupt their statistics with …incidental comment (sic) about a given entry; cf. the Khorsabad List (JNES 18 [1954], 210 ff.), which describes the first seventeen rulers as “dwelling in tents,” using an analogous participial form (line 10)."

For Speiser 1964: 35: “…the Mesopotamian king lists sometimes interrupt their statistics with …incidental comment (sic) about a given entry; cf. the Khorsabad List (JNES 18 [1954], 210 ff.), which describes the first seventeen rulers as “dwelling in tents,” using an analogous participial form (line 10).”

For Hess 1992: i, 806 “...[t]he verbal root qnh associates 4:1 with the genealogy of Cain in 4:17-24. In v 20 Jabal is described as the father of miqneh (RSV “[those who have] cattle”), which has a root similar to that of Cain. Cain reappears in the last-named figure of his line, Tubal-Cain.”

For Hess 1992:i,806 “…the name [Cain] may be found in the Hebrew qina, "song." This has the advantage of appearing in biblical Hebrew but lacks examples of a qatil noun formation such as the name Cain possesses... In Ugaritic [‘Na’amah’] may mean ‘song.'” In the story itself, however, Na’amah is associated with metal working, not with music.


For Clifford and Murphy 1991:13 ”...[t]he most important cultural institution of civilization, authentic worship, was not founded by a son of the wrathful Cain, but by the replacement of the favored Abel. According to the E source, the name of Yahweh was revealed first to Moses at Sinai (Exod 3:13-15); P also places the revelation of the name in Moses' time (Exod 6:2-8)."

It is worth noting, however, that “…it is the woman, again asserting her creative vitality, who pronounces the name of God for the first time and proclaims that she participates with God in the act of creation.” (Cotter 2003:42)

http://members.tripod.com/~ib205/amenhotep_2_1.html

Lemche 1985:421-429

“Habiru” _ABD_ 3:6-10


Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert Nakhai, “A Landscape Comes to Life: The Iron Age I”. _NEA_ 62 (1999): 62-


201 Denise Dick Herr and Mary Petrina Boyd, “A Watermelon Named Abimelech.” BARev


203 CultureFocus (http://www.culturefocus.com/egypt_pyramids.htm) is an archive of high quality photographs from spectacular ancient and contemporary sites around the world.

204 The Petrie Museum (http://www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk/museum/petrie.html) houses an inspiring collection of Egyptian and Sudanese archaeology. The museum is attached to the Institute of Archaeology, University College London

205 The Open Cheops Committee (http://www.opencheops.org/page9.htm) is an advocacy group challenging dominant interpretations of the pyramids on the Giza Plain.


208 Not “the nation of Israel” as in NRSV, but “the army of their enemies”. Same word in Hebrew. See: Victor H. Matthew, Patroal Nomadism in the Mari Kingdom: 63-65. The concept here is not “revenge” but “just sentence”. The Westerners wanted to kill the people of Gibeon, so -- on the principle of parity -- the divine assembly sentences the Westerners to death.


210 Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament 274.

211 Edinburgh Ras Shamra Project. New College, University of Edinburgh (http://homepages.ed.ac.uk/ugarit/home.htm)
John Garstang (http://www.pef.org.uk/Pages/Garstang.htm)

Kathleen M. Kenyon (http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/4770/index.html)

Institute of Archaeology, University College London (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/frontpage/tubb.htm)

http://www.geocities.com/jim_lancaster.geo/ladder3.html is a short piece of personal research by an interested layman.


http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Historical_Problem.htm