

5-1-1967

The Conquest of Palestine in the Light of Archaeology

Paul W. Lapp

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lapp, Paul W. (1967) "The Conquest of Palestine in the Light of Archaeology," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 38, Article 32.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol38/iss1/32>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

Lapp: The Conquest of Palestine in the Light of Archaeology

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

**The Conquest of Palestine in the Light
of Archaeology**

PAUL W. LAPP

Documentation

Theological Observer

Homiletics

Brief Study

Book Review

Vol. XXXVIII

May 1967

No. 5

Give us this day our daily bread.

**IS THIS PETITION OBSOLETE FOR TODAY'S WORLD?
IS MAN TODAY SO SECURE THAT HE NO LONGER NEEDS
GOD'S DAILY BREAD?**

"Even if today's man believes he can do away with insecurity, predict the future, and shape everything according to his own will, he can do it only by increasing his insecurity. We experience this daily with our technology. The more men learn to determine the future and shape the world and the more they make God's world into a world of men, they are also making humanity as well as the life of every individual more dependent on unpredictable factors, which the individual cannot possibly control anymore. Man becomes dependent on powers whose control is in the hands of only a few, and their failure endangers the lives of millions.

"Our insecurity does not decrease with progress; it actually increases to the same extent that we must rely on men. The more technology advances, the more man becomes a danger to himself. Is not the psalmist right when he says, 'It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in man' (Ps. 118:8)? And today we should add, 'or to put confidence in technology!'

"But God remains as He is. He watches over our days and our lives. He gives us daily what we need when we do our work in His service. That is why we may also lay ourselves to rest every day with thankful and hopeful hearts. We may begin each new day in His name and thus in the knowledge that it comes from Him and is protected in His hand. God leads us through all our days."

Excerpts from **A PRAYER FOR THE WORLD** By Georg Vicedom
A NEW book that reinterprets the Lord's Prayer as a prayer for mission in today's world.

Looking for new ideas for a pulpit series? The insights you gain from *A Prayer for the World* will help you plan an exciting sermon series on the Lord's Prayer or mission.

Paperbound, 172 pages, 5 3/8 x 8, \$2.95, Order No. 12U2271
Use enclosed order card.

CONCORDIA

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

Volume XXXVIII

May 1967

Number 5

The Theological Journal of
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Edited by
THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY is published monthly, except July-August when bimonthly, by Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118, to which all business correspondence is to be addressed. \$3.50 per annum, anywhere in the world, payable in advance. Second-class postage paid at St. Louis, Mo. © 1967 Concordia Publishing House. Printed in U.S.A.

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

Contents

The Conquest of Palestine in the Light of Archaeology PAUL W. LAPP	283
Documentation	301
Theological Observer	318
Homiletics	320
Brief Study	329
Book Review	333

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

VICTOR BARTLING, ROBERT BERTRAM, ALFRED O. FUERBRINGER
GEORGE W. HOYER,* HERBERT T. MAYER (Managing Editor) *
ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN,* GILBERT A. THIELE
WALTER WEGNER (Acting Editor), ANDREW WEYERMANN
* On leave of absence

*Address all communications to the Editorial Committee in care of
Walter Wegner, 801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63105*

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY *now available on Microfilm*

One of the most pressing problems facing libraries today is inadequate storage space for the ever-increasing flow of publications. To help librarians plagued with this problem we have entered into an agreement with University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich., to make CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY available to libraries in microfilm form. Microfilm makes it possible for libraries to use and store an entire volume of 12 issues of this magazine on a single roll.

For further details concerning purchase and date when volumes will be available, write to University Microfilms, 313 N. First Street, Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Conquest of Palestine in the Light of Archaeology

PAUL W. LAPP

The first part of this article considers those Palestinian tells that date roughly between the latter part of the 13th and the 11th century B.C. The archaeological history of the pertinent sites is summarized by major geographical area. After a second part, briefly discussing the ceramic typology of the period, the final section deals with the historical meaning of the evidence cited, both *per se* and in relation to the other types of evidence.

The last-mentioned relation is the controversial area that provides motivation for this paper. The problem revolves around the relation between the primary historical documents (firsthand documents and inscriptions), the secondary documents (especially the Biblical records), and the archaeological evidence. All agree that the primary documents (critically evaluated) are of the highest significance for explicating both secondary documents and archae-

ological evidence (especially when they are found in stratified deposits). The secondary documents can, in a sense, be considered stratified, although it must be remembered that a given "stratum" of literary tradition can be transformed or recast by a succeeding "stratum." Such recasting is often more difficult to analyze than archaeological disturbances. The archaeological strata are at times hopelessly mixed, at times sharply defined. At present, it seems fair to state that components of a mixed archaeological context can be isolated and dated more precisely than correspondingly mixed literary components. The comparative typology of this period is such that it has been vindicated by all recent finds of primary documents in recognizable strata so that a fair-sized, homogeneous group of artifacts from this age can be dated within a period of less than half a century. This is much greater precision than can be claimed for comparative epigraphy at this time.

The controversy is over the evaluation of the archaeological material and its relation to the Biblical conquest narratives. Professor Martin Noth has given by far the stronger weight to the literary evidence (in light of primary documents and his critical reconstruction),¹ and he places emphasis on the precarious nature of anepigraphic archaeological evidence. Professor William Albright defends and illustrates the signifi-

Paul W. Lapp served from 1961 to 1965 as director of the Jerusalem School of the American Schools of Oriental Research. In 1965 he was appointed professor of Near Eastern history and archaeology at the Jerusalem School. He has written extensively in the field of Biblical archaeology and has served as director of several archaeological expeditions in Jordan. In 1963 and 1966 he directed the Concordia-ASOR Archaeological Expedition to Taanach under the joint sponsorship of the Jerusalem School and the School for Graduate Studies of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This article contains the substance of one of the lectures he delivered on a recent tour of ASOR schools in the United States.

¹ M. Noth, *The History of Israel*, trans. Peter Ackroyd, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 42—49, 82.

cance of anepigraphic evidence.² His method involves "dovetailing" the archaeological and literary evidence, which, he feels, makes a more precise chronology possible.³ Noth's reaction to such an approach is to assert that Palestinian archaeology has not yet "entirely overcome the improper search for direct Biblical connection."⁴ Albright does not slight the literary evidence, however. In fact, his principle of accepting the authenticity of the literary tradition in the absence of evidence to the contrary⁵ leads to a presentation of the historical picture of the conquest era that conserves as historical much more of the literary traditions than the reconstruction of Noth,⁶ since the latter bases much of his analysis on his aetiological and *Ortsgebundenheit* principles.⁷

Specific points of disagreement between Noth and Albright on the evaluation of the archaeological material about to be

² W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 49—64.

³ W. F. Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine* (London, 1960), p. 117. Cf. K. Kenyon, *Digging Up Jericho* (New York, 1957), p. 258, for a statement on the primacy of archaeological evidence.

⁴ Noth, p. 47.

⁵ Cf. W. F. Albright, "The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, 62 (April 1936), p. 26; *The Biblical Period* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 32 et passim.

⁶ For the presentation of Albright's construction, see G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia, 1957), Chs. v—vii. Cf. W. F. Albright, *The Biblical Period*, pp. 24—34. For Noth's construction, see the first part of his *The History of Israel*.

⁷ Noth, pp. 72—73. Cf. W. F. Albright, "The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeology," *BASOR*, 74 (April 1939), pp. 12ff.

reviewed are best reflected by the following quotations.

Referring to Albright's attempt to relate a number of 13th-century destructions of Palestinian cities to the Israelites, Noth says, "But so far there has been no absolutely certain evidence of this kind, and such evidence is in fact hardly likely to be found. For the Israelite tribes did not acquire their territories by warlike conquest and the destruction of Canaanite cities, but usually settled in hitherto unoccupied parts of the country."⁸ After stating that archaeological evidence for these destructions should more probably be attributed to the Sea Peoples, he continues, "If the beginnings of these settlements could be dated with archaeological accuracy, that would help to ascertain the date of the occupation. But that is scarcely possible. . . . The old sites which date [from the beginning of the Iron Age⁹] have usually disintegrated and their remains have been scattered in the course of time and have disappeared; all that has survived on the old sites are miscellaneous relics, usually without any ascertainable stratification . . . and this fact makes it impossible to date the, for the most part scanty, remains at all accurately. It follows that the beginning of the Israelite settlement cannot be dated any more exactly and definitely from an archaeological point of view than from the evidence of the literary tradition. Hence the matter must be left at a cautious defining of the period of the Israelite occupation."¹⁰

⁸ Noth, p. 82, and Noth's footnote 2. Note Noth's comment in n. 2 asserting the aetiological origins of the conquest narratives in the first half of the Book of Joshua.

⁹ Note my revision of this translation.

¹⁰ Noth, pp. 82—83.

Albright's approach represents a more positive evaluation of the archaeological evidence. After presenting evidence for relating a number of 13th-century destruction levels to the Israelites, Albright states in opposition to Noth, "In view of the foregoing considerations, which can easily be extended and supplemented, there is no doubt that the burden of proof is now entirely on those scholars who still wish to place the main phase of the Israelite conquest of Palestine before the 13th century. . . . On the other hand, Professor Noth's extreme scepticism toward the authenticity of the early Israelite historical tradition is opposed to analogy and is contradicted by the archaeological evidence."¹¹

Albright has also written: "The progress of excavation and of philological interpretation of inscriptions has made it absolutely certain, in the writer's judgment, that the principal phase of the Conquest must be dated in the second half of the thirteenth century."¹² Again: "Excavations show that there was only a short interval between the destruction of such Canaanite towns as Debir and Bethel, and their re-occupation by Israel. This means that the Israelite invasion was not a characteristic irruption of nomads, who continued to live in tents for generations after their first invasion. Neither was the Israelite conquest of Canaan a gradual infiltration, as often insisted by modern scholars."¹³

More recently Professor Mendenhall has injected a new element into the discussion of the nature of the conquest. His view may conveniently be summarized in the following quotation. "The fact is, and the

present writer would regard it as a fact though not every detail can be 'proven,' that both the Amarna materials and the biblical events represent politically the same process: namely, the withdrawal, not physically and geographically, but politically and subjectively, of large population groups from any obligation to the existing political regimes, and therefore, the renunciation of any protection from those sources. In other words, there was no statistically important invasion of Palestine at the beginning of the twelve tribe system of Israel. There was no radical displacement of population, there was no genocide, there was no large scale driving out of population, only of royal administrators (of necessity!). In summary, there was no real conquest of Palestine at all; what happened instead may be termed, from the point of view of the secular historian interested only in socio-political processes, a peasants' revolt against the network of interlocking Canaanite city states."¹⁴

With such divergent views in mind, let us turn to the stratigraphic evidence.

I. THE STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

A. *Transjordan and the Jordan Valley.*

Discussing the conclusions from his broad topographical survey of Transjordan, Nelson Glueck says that there was a dip in occupation of sites "down to Late Bronze II when another period of heavy sedentary occupation begins. Sedentary occupation doesn't seem to have ceased altogether during the latter part of the Middle and beginning of Late Bronze, however."¹⁵

¹⁴ "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 25 (1962), p. 73.

¹⁵ N. Glueck, "Three Israelite Towns in the Jordan Valley: Zarethan, Succoth, Zaphon," *BASOR*, 90 (April 1943), p. 19.

¹¹ *BASOR*, 74, p. 23.

¹² *The Biblical Period*, p. 27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 30—31.

"During Iron Age I—II, there was an intensive and widespread building of fortified cities and open settlements both in Transjordan and the Jordan Valley."¹⁶ More recent topographical work especially at the sites which are likely candidates for identification with sites along the pre-conquest route indicates that, with the exception of Heshbon, none of these sites have surface sherds until after the beginning of the 12th century B.C.¹⁷ This applies also to the site of Dhiban, where I am convinced that the sherds Professor Morton wants to consider Late Bronze are actually from after the beginning of the 12th century. The publication of the earlier Dhiban campaigns is of no help, since no 13th-century pottery is published.¹⁸

This impression has been strongly reinforced through the many hours spent examining the sherds from Transjordan sites gathered annually by the *Lehrkursus* of the German Evangelical Institute. Gilead has been subjected to a thorough and systematic surface survey by Siegfried Mittmann, and an examination of nearly all his material indicates that, except for the Jordan valley and the extreme north, settled occupation does not begin until after 1200 B.C. Basically, Glueck's conclusion has been confirmed by Mittmann's investigations, which have identified "eine

erstaunliche Menge früheisenzeitlicher Neugründungen."¹⁹

This evidence should not be used to suggest that settlements in Edom and Moab were not developing during the 13th century, for this would contradict literary evidence from Egypt.²⁰ The evidence may be used to emphasize the limited extent of these settlements and perhaps even their camplike character before the twelfth century. Certainly it is unwarranted to assume that the inhabitants would not have had strictly defined borders if they were still largely seminomadic, and the account of the skirting of Edom and Moab in the last half of the 13th century is not at all incompatible with the literary and archaeological evidence.²¹

Excavations at the neighboring Jordan Valley sites of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh and Deir 'Alla are incomplete but already furnish some interesting stratified evidence. At

¹⁹ Siegfried Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes* (Tübingen, 1966; unpublished), p. 224. Peter Parr has examined much similar material and has come to the same chronological conclusions.

²⁰ Recently summarized with new evidence by K. A. Kitchen, "Some New Light on the Asiatic Wars of Rameses II," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 50 (1964), pp. 47—70. Cf. also now his *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 57—75, which provides a fuller discussion of this problem and the problem of the conquest in general.

²¹ Certain details of the narrative should not be pressed. For example, the reference to the king of Edom is probably an anachronism in light of Ex. 15:15 and even Gen. 36:31-39. Cf. J. R. Bartlett, "The Edomite King-list of Genesis XXVI. 31-39 and 1 Chron. I. 43-50," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 16 (1965), p. 313. The late 13th-century date of the Conquest is now almost universally held and is not defended here. Cf. most recently Kitchen, p. 70.

¹⁶ N. Glueck, "Go, View the Land," *BASOR*, 122 (April 1951), p. 18.

¹⁷ A topographical examination of these sites was undertaken by Professor Bernhard Anderson, who kindly consulted me on the dating of the sherds. New light from Heshbon may be expected when Professor Siegfried Horn begins excavations there this spring.

¹⁸ F. V. Winnett and W. L. Reed, "The Excavations at Dibon (Dhibān) in Moab," *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 36-7 (1964).

Sa'idiyeh, where the stratigraphy is as yet unclear, it appears that a large and rich cemetery ceased to be used in the 12th century B.C.²² At Deir 'Alla, as reported by H. J. Franken, after the massive destruction at the end of the Late Bronze age "and long before the ruins had been levelled down by erosion, the site was occupied by what seems to have been a semi-nomadic tribe. These people dug deep pits almost everywhere, sometimes to a depth of almost 2 m.—a circumstance which makes archaeological work in these levels rather difficult. It was these people who camped against the surviving LB walls, and when a stock of their fuel seems accidentally to have caught on fire, these wall stumps were burned right through."²³ Of special importance is the discovery of a faience vase with the cartouche of the Egyptian Queen Tausert, which dates this Late Bronze destruction between 1214 and 1194.²⁴ It is only above the camping debris that layers containing Philistine pottery occur. The stratigraphic evidence fits the sequence: Canaanites, Israelites, Sea People.

B. *Northern Palestine*. The only excavated site north of the Valley of Jezreel with pertinent stratigraphy is Hazor. Here, to quote Yadin, "when we dug further we discovered below it [Stratum XI, a pre-Solomonic stratum with a pagan Israelite shrine] yet an earlier Israelite settlement (Stratum XII), the very first on the site of

the destroyed Canaanite city. This bore all the marks of a very poor settlement, poorer even than its successor, and can best be described as the temporary dwelling of a seminomadic people. Its only remains consisted of rubble foundations of tents and huts, numerous silos dug into the earth for the storage of pottery and grain and crude ovens sometimes made of disused store jars. This establishes the significant point that after the Israelite destruction of Canaanite Hazor, the city was not reconstructed as a solid fortified town until the time of Solomon. . . . [This] seems to me to indicate that the contemporary Israelite settlements found in Galilee belong to the 'post-conquest' period and were not the result of a peaceful infiltration prior to the conquest as some scholars hold."²⁵ This evidence came from Area B in the last season. In the same season in Area A there were also remains of Stratum XII of the same character, but no remains of Stratum XI were found, probably because of the limited size of this settlement. Digging in other areas in previous campaigns showed that these strata did not cover the mound and were limited to the southern summit. The occupation after the destruction of Late Bronze Hazor is strikingly similar to that at Deir 'Alla.

In the Valley of Jezreel three strategic sites have been extensively excavated. The Egyptian fortress of Beth-shan was excavated for 10 seasons, but unfortunately the resulting publications need much chronological reinterpretation, and adequate description of the stratigraphy is lacking. Stratum VI (Sethos I) consists of two

²² J. B. Pritchard, "A Cosmopolitan Culture of the Late Bronze Age," *Expedition*, 7 (1965), pp. 26—33.

²³ H. J. Franken, "Excavations at Deir 'Alla, Season 1964," *Vetus Testamentum*, 14 (1964), pp. 418f.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 (1961), Pl. 5; 12 (1962), pp. 464ff.; 14, p. 219.

²⁵ Y. Yadin, "The Fourth Season of Excavation at Hazor," pp. 13f. Cf. J. Gray, "Hazor," *Vetus Testamentum*, 16 (1966), pp. 47—52.

phases²⁶ and has been dated by Albright mostly to the 12th century B.C.²⁷ Wright suggests that this stratum is the result of the rebuilding of Rameses III early in the 12th century. The site then fell into disuse about the end of his reign.²⁸ Stratum V represents occupation of the 11th century probably to the time of Solomon.²⁹ The lack of Philistine pottery leads Wright to suggest that in this period the city was rebuilt by the Canaanites and taken over by the Philistines just before the time of Saul.³⁰ Because of the inadequate publication, however, about all we can say on the basis of the archaeological evidence is that there was an Egyptian-dominated occupation of Beth-shan in the middle quarters of the 12th century³¹ and an occupation in the 11th century, perhaps under local Canaanite rule.³²

Megiddo, one of the largest tells in Palestine, was the scene of ambitious excavations by the University of Chicago. The attempt to excavate the entire mound stratum by stratum was abandoned when

funds fell short, and the final publication left much to be desired.³³ Subsequent study has resulted in proposals for changes in designations of stratification and chronology by Wright,³⁴ numerous and at times fluctuating observations of Albright,³⁵ and a comprehensive reworking of the Iron age materials is promised by Gus Van Beek.³⁶ This history of the period of the conquest comes from Strata VII—V, which can be constructed somewhat as follows. Stratum VIIb was destroyed about 1200 B.C.³⁷ Stratum VIIa occupied the tell for the next half-century, utilizing the same architectural outlines.³⁸ Then occurs an occupational gap followed by inferior constructions with entirely different orientation in VIb, which occupied the tell, together with the closely related phase VIa, from the end of the 12th century to the mid-11th century³⁹ or second half of the 11th century.⁴⁰ There is another complete shift in architectural orientation, and construction is much poorer in Stratum V,

²⁶ A. Rowe, *Beth-shan I* (Philadelphia, 1930), p. 30.

²⁷ *Tell Beit Mirsim II* (*AASOR*, 17; New Haven, 1938), p. 77.

²⁸ *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 94f.

²⁹ G. E. Wright, "Archaeological Observations on the Period of the Judges and the Early Monarchy," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 60 (1941), p. 34. Cf. n. 25.

³⁰ *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 98.

³¹ Egyptian domination is indicated by the discovery of a statue of Rameses III (*Beth-shan I*, pp. 36, 38; *Beth-shan II*, Part I, p. 29), bricks stamped with the mark of Rameses III (*ibid.*, p. 2), and an inscribed doorjamb attributed to the period of Rameses III (*ibid.*, p. 18).

³² Indicated by the abundance of Canaanite cult objects, sanctuaries, and shrines. Cf. *ibid.*, chs. iii—vi.

³³ Cf. G. E. Wright's review in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, 53 (1949), pp. 55 to 60.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

³⁵ *BASOR*, 62, pp. 26—31; 68, pp. 22—26; 74, pp. 11—23; 78, pp. 7—9; 150, pp. 21—25.

³⁶ "The Date of Tell Atu Huwan, Stratum III," *BASOR*, 138 (April 1955), p. 37, n. 7.

³⁷ G. Loud, *Megiddo II* (Chicago, 1948), p. 29. The precise date has yet to be determined. Cf. n. 32 for dates.

³⁸ This stratum is dated by the bronze base of a statue of Rameses VI to about 1140 B.C. (*Megiddo II*, pp. 135ff.) and a pincase of Rameses III (cf. *BASOR*, 78, pp. 7—9).

³⁹ *Megiddo II*, p. 114.

⁴⁰ Cf. G. E. Wright, "The Archaeology of Palestine," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), p. 97, Chart 8.

which continues into the period of the United Monarchy.⁴¹ One problem in the dating of the Megiddo strata is the presence of a few Philistine sherds in Stratum VII.⁴² If not intrusive, it might be suggested that they could have been imports from Cyprus, where Philistine ware begins to appear about 1225 B.C.⁴³ Wright, however, maintains that they belong to the second half of the 12th century.⁴⁴ Albright has shifted his opinion to agree with the excavators that the entire period is non-Israelite.⁴⁵ Just who occupied the tell in declining Strata VI and V is still enigmatic,⁴⁶ though Wright and Mazar would claim that Vb is Davidic and Israelite.⁴⁷

At Taanach the Concordia/ASOR excavations have revealed that substantial areas of the site were not intensely occupied in the last centuries of the second millennium. There was some resurgence of occupation at the beginning of the 12th century, which continued probably through the third quarter of that century, when three important and widely separated buildings were massively destroyed. After this no occupation has so far been discovered that

⁴¹ *Megiddo II*, p. 45.

⁴² G. M. Shipton, *Notes on the Megiddo Pottery of Strata VI—XX* (Chicago, 1938), pp. 5f.

⁴³ Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine*, pp. 114f.

⁴⁴ This and other views of Wright were kindly communicated to me during the preparation of a seminar paper on the Conquest in 1958.

⁴⁵ *Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 120. Cf. *BASOR*, 78, pp. 7—9.

⁴⁶ Albright continues to compare these phases with Israelite occupation to the south. *Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 119.

⁴⁷ Cf. n. 42.

is clearly datable before the late 11th century.⁴⁸

In the North, then, Hazor, Megiddo, and Beth-shan suffered some form of destruction about 1200 B.C. Megiddo and Beth-shan recover but enter a period of decline, while Hazor becomes a scantily occupied campsite. At Taanach the Late Bronze tradition continues to the late 12th century and is then violently cut off.

C. Central Palestine. A map showing excavated sites of Ephraim and Manasseh with significant Iron I stratigraphy would contain only the sites of Shechem and Shiloh. At Shechem, excavation in the East Gate area has shown that the Late Bronze fortification system was not destroyed but was slightly renovated in Iron I. A series of Late Bronze through Iron I floors shows a separation but no destruction between the periods.⁴⁹ The Iron I phase ceases apparently by the early 11th century.⁵⁰ At Shiloh no Late Bronze occupation was discovered, but there is evidence for occupation from the 12th to early 11th centuries.⁵¹ At both sites there were substantial excavated areas in which Late Bronze and Iron I occupation never existed or had been completely cleared away. This agrees with the scanty Late Bronze and Iron I finds at Tell el-Far'ah (N).⁵²

⁴⁸ P. W. Lapp, "The 1963 Excavation at Ta'annek," *BASOR*, 173 (February 1964), p. 8.

⁴⁹ G. E. Wright, "The Second Campaign at Tell Balatah," *BASOR*, 148 (December 1957), pp. 22 f.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *BASOR*, 9, pp. 10—11; *BASOR*, 35, pp. 4 to 5; *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, 10, p. 95; *Ain Shems V*, p. 12.

⁵² R. de Vaux, "Les seconde campagne de fouilles à Tell el-Far'ah, près Naplouse," *Revue Biblique*, 55 (1948), p. 571.

D. *Southern Palestine*. From Shiloh we turn immediately to the south to the neighboring sites of Ai and Bethel. At Ai we find an occupation in the 12th and early 11th centuries (Callaway says 1200 to 1000), after the site had been abandoned in Early Bronze times. Callaway reports of the 1964 campaign that "the village appears from present evidence to have been unfortified, and occupation seems to have been interrupted by periodic abandonment, not violent destruction. Nothing in the present evidence warrants an identification of the village with the city of 'Ai captured by Joshua."⁵³

Bethel was violently destroyed in the 13th century B.C. Contrary to the excavation report that dates this destruction in the "first half" of the 13th century,⁵⁴ I would suggest that Bethel was destroyed in the last half of that century. The site shows evidence of at least two more destructions in the three phases of occupation belonging to the 12th and 11th centuries.⁵⁵ It is hoped that the final publication will date these phases more precisely and explain why these phases contained Philistine ware only in the 1934 campaign. The complete break between the Late Bronze and Iron I phases in the

building plans should be noted, as well as the fact that in the three Iron I phases the masonry gets progressively worse.⁵⁶

Further south is Tell en-Nasbeh, probably Biblical Mizpah. Here is found a gap in occupation of a millennium and a half before the beginning of Iron I.⁵⁷ The occupation, however, was not extensive and probably unfortified, although it is proved to have existed in the 11th century by a quantity of Philistine sherds.⁵⁸

El-Jib is a southern neighbor of Tell en-Nasbeh. The University of Pennsylvania Museum excavations have found conclusive evidence to support the link between the modern name and Biblical Gibeon. Wine jars were found with handles bearing the inscription Gibeon, together with a funnel which showed they had been filled at the site. The excavator claims not to have found evidence of Late Bronze occupation on the mound, but seven tombs used in the Late Bronze period were discovered. Gibeon was a large and well-fortified Iron I town. If there were in fact no Late Bronze occupation of the mound, it would be difficult to associate the Gibeonites of the Conquest account with the site. Since only a tiny fraction of the mound was excavated, since surface sherds of the Late Bronze II period have been picked up on the surface of the mound, and since there are tombs of the period, it seems quite likely that there was a Late Bronze occupation. Because of the inadequate methods employed in the excavation and publication, the possibility that the Iron I fortifications may have

⁵³ J. A. Callaway, "The 1964 'Ai (et-Tell) Excavations," *BASOR*, 178, (April 1965), pp. 27 f. For a proposed solution to the divergence between literary and archaeological evidence, see Albright's *The Biblical Period*, p. 29, with n. 60.

⁵⁴ W. F. Albright, "Observations on the Bethel Report," *BASOR*, 57 (February 1935), p. 30. Cf. W. F. Albright, "The Kyle Memorial Excavation at Bethel," *BASOR*, 56 (December 1934), p. 9. Note Albright's own modification to "at some time in the thirteenth century B. C." in *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 278.

⁵⁵ W. F. Albright, "The First Month of Excavation at Bethel," *BASOR*, 55 (October 1934), p. 24. Cf. *BASOR*, 56, p. 12; 137, p. 7.

⁵⁶ *BASOR*, 56, pp. 9—11.

⁵⁷ C. C. McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I* (Berkeley, 1947), p. 60.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 180, 186; *BASOR*, 49, p. 17.

been founded in the 13th century cannot be ruled out.⁵⁹

At Tell el-Ful, Gibeah of Saul, a salvage campaign was conducted in 1964, following upon Albright's excavations of 1922 and 1933. Here the earliest substantial occupation, with which no structures are associated, belongs to the first half of the 12th century. After this, the site was abandoned until the time of Saul.⁶⁰

A small sounding north of Khirbet Mefjar has unearthed sherds suggesting that Gilgal was in the vicinity,⁶¹ but at Jericho there is absolutely no evidence of occupation after the 14th century B.C., according to Miss Kathleen Kenyon.⁶² This need not be an obstacle to its identification with the site of Joshua's conquest, for a tell abandoned in the early Iron age must inevitably have suffered considerable erosion in three millennia. This is an especially strong possibility where the tell is almost entirely a mudbrick site located in an area that receives occasional heavy rains. In fact, most of Middle and Late

Bronze Jericho was eroded away before the arrival of modern excavators.

From the new excavations at Gezer Ernest Wright reports: "Strata 3 and 4 in this area are Philistine, from the time of the Philistine control of this Canaanite city-state. Stratum 4 is clearly from the earliest part of the Philistine period and dates from the second half of the 12th century B.C. in all probability. Stratum 5 is transitional between the 13th and 12th centuries, while Stratum 6 belongs earlier in the LB age."⁶³ Too little has been excavated to characterize the occupations yet, but there does appear to be pre-Philistine Iron I occupation.

South of Gezer are two sites to be mentioned in passing for their Iron I occupations, Eltekeh and Zorah, the former having been unoccupied in the Bronze age.⁶⁴ South of Zorah is Beth-shemesh, where significant Late Bronze and Iron I occupations occur. The Bronze age ends with a violent destruction of Stratum IVb. Stratum III of the 12th—11th century is characterized by Philistine pottery, one building phase without adequate fortification, a decline in prosperity compared with the Late Bronze era, and probably a decline in population.⁶⁵ It was destroyed violently in the second half of the 11th century.⁶⁶ Two silos with sherds comparable to those of Tell Beit Mirsim B₁ should also be noted in Stratum IVb.⁶⁷ They probably

⁵⁹ For the excavator's contrasting interpretation see J. B. Pritchard, "Culture and History," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship* (Nashville, 1965), pp. 318—19. For references to excavation publications and an incisive critique of Pritchard's archaeological work see R. de Vaux's review of the last volume of his final Gibeon publication, *Winery, Defenses, and Soundings at Gibeon*, in *Revue Biblique*, 73 (1966), pp. 130—35.

⁶⁰ Paul W. Lapp, "Tell el-Ful," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 28 (1965), pp. 2—4. Cf. W. F. Albright, "Excavations and Results at Tell el-Ful (Gibeah of Saul)," *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 4 (1924), pp. 45—48; *BASOR*, 56, p. 7.

⁶¹ J. Muilenburg, "The Site of Ancient Gilgal," *BASOR*, 140 (December 1955), pp. 11 to 27. Other possible identifications are noted.

⁶² Kenyon, *Digging Up Jericho*, pp. 261 f.

⁶³ G. E. Wright, "Hebrew Union College Biblical and Archaeological School Newsletter No. 3," (Mimeographed; May 1965), p. 4.

⁶⁴ *BASOR*, 15, p. 8; 16, p. 4.

⁶⁵ E. Grant and G. E. Wright, *Ain Shems V* (Haverford, 1939), pp. 7, 11, 23, 51.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

belong to the period between the Late Bronze destruction and the Philistine strata, but there is some uncertainty because excavation was not carried on stratigraphically.

Malhab, a site between two and three miles southwest of Jerusalem, with pottery exclusively from the 11th century,⁶⁸ can be noted before we proceed south to Beth-zur. At the latter there is no evidence for occupation at the end of the Late Bronze age, but there is evidence of settlement from the late 13th or early 12th century, which was destroyed in the latter part of the 11th century.⁶⁹ Philistine ware was sparse, and no trace of walls for Iron I was found. A reuse of Late Bronze fortifications is doubtful.⁷⁰

Southwest of Beth-zur is Tell Beit Mirsim, probably Debir or Kiriathsepher, where Albright conducted a series of campaigns that have produced most significant results for Palestinian archaeology. The identifications of the sites here mentioned, as well as the datings of stratification, rest largely on the pioneering work in pottery chronology in the definitive publications of Tell Beit Mirsim. The stratification here showed that the Late Bronze era (Stratum C) ended in a general destruction toward the end of the 13th century. Immediate reoccupation is indicated by houses built in the destruction ashes.⁷¹ This reoc-

cupation (Stratum B) is characterized by a rather small number of houses scattered over the tell without fortification.⁷² The first of the two phases of this occupation (dating respectively about 1220—1150 and 1150—1000) from the Judges' era is characterized by the absence of Philistine pottery, the second by its occurrence.⁷³ A localized destruction is noted about the middle of the 11th century.⁷⁴ It should be noted that the relative dating of these strata was based on the pottery taken from clearly defined strata or loci, but the absolute dating is the result of applying to the relative dates information taken from historical records and Biblical documents. At this site Albright was the first to delineate the sequence of Late Bronze destruction, poor reoccupation, and Philistine layers and to relate this sequence to the succession: Canaanites, Israelites, and Philistines. Albright notes two sites near Tell Beit Mirsim with Iron I pottery, Tell 'Eitun and Tell el-Khuweilifeh, the former having no evidence of Late Bronze occupation.⁷⁵

Northwest of Tell Beit Mirsim is Lachish, another city completely destroyed at the end of the Late Bronze age. The dating of this destruction is to be related to three bowls inscribed with hieratic characters, one of which mentions the fourth

⁶⁸ *BASOR*, 10, p. 2.

⁶⁹ O. R. Sellers and W. F. Albright, "The First Campaign of Excavation at Beth-zur," *BASOR*, 43 (October 1931), pp. 5, 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7. R. W. Funk in "The 1957 Campaign at Beth-zur," *BASOR*, 150 (April 1958), p. 12, suggests a reuse of Middle Bronze fortifications, but this is dubious.

⁷¹ W. F. Albright, *Tell Beit Mirsim III* (*AASOR*, 21—22; New Haven, 1943), pp. 10 f.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 10 f.

⁷³ W. F. Albright, *Tell Beit Mirsim I B* (*AASOR*, 13; New Haven, 1933), pp. 61—63. Note that the pre-Philistine phase is represented primarily by ceramic groups from silos. Two homogeneous silo groups are published, and six others are reported. Cf. W. F. Albright, *Tell Beit Mirsim I* (*AASOR* 12; New Haven, 1932), pp. 58—61.

⁷⁴ *Tell Beit Mirsim III*, p. 10.

⁷⁵ *Tell Beit Mirsim II*, pp. 2 f.

year of an Egyptian monarch. Albright points out that this makes about 1220 B. C. the earliest possible date for the destruction, that is, the fourth year of Marniptah, although a later date is conceivable.⁷⁶ *Lachish II*⁷⁷ mentions Albright's date and a date about a quarter of a century later as possibilities, preferring the earlier date because of pottery evidence. *Lachish IV*⁷⁸ says that the evidence is not strong enough to exclude either possibility, although a note from Professor Cerny prefers the date in Marniptah's reign for the hieratic inscriptions. Following the destruction, Lachish is abandoned during the period of the Judges.

The early excavations at Tell es-Safi (at the western opening of the Valley of Elah and perhaps to be identified with Libnah) may indicate that this site was occupied in the period of the Judges.⁷⁹ The Petrie and Bliss excavations during the 1890s at Tell el-Hesi (Biblical Eglon) give stronger evidence for a destruction at the end of the Late Bronze age followed by a gap in occupation during most of the period of the Judges.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 255.

⁷⁷ O. Tufnell *et al.*, *Lachish II* (London, 1940), *Text*, pp. 22 f.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 133.

⁷⁹ F. J. Bliss and R. A. S. Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine During the Years 1898 to 1900* (London, 1902), p. 35. Cf. *AASOR*, 4, p. 16.

⁸⁰ F. J. Bliss, *Mound of Many Cities* (London, 1894), pp. 64, 66—70, 88. F. Petrie, *Tell el Hesi (Lachish)* (London, 1891), pp. 16—19. Cf. *Tell Beit Mirsim I*, p. 55; Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 100; *BASOR*, 15, p. 7; 17, p. 8; G. E. Wright, "The Literary and Historical Problem of Joshua 10 and Judges 1," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 5 (1946), p. 111.

A number of generalizations may be made from the "Judean" excavations. (1) Many of these sites are newly occupied in the Iron I period or are occupied again after a gap in occupation for centuries. (2) Those sites that give evidence of Late Bronze occupation are all violently destroyed, most of them certainly in the last half of the 13th century. Libnah, Tell el-Far'ah, and Tell Jemmeh, however, should be considered with the coastal cities. (3) Some places were not reoccupied in the Iron period, but most sites appear to have been immediately reoccupied, either intensively or rather sparsely. (4) The reoccupation is characterized by an inferior form of masonry and lack of any adequate fortification. (5) The period of the Judges is marked by cultural decline at a number of these tells. (6) More than one phase of occupation in this period indicates a lack of political stability. (7) There seems to be evidence of destruction at a number of sites near the middle of the 11th century.

E. *The Palestinian Coast*. The sites to be considered from south to north are Tell el-Far'ah (S), Tell Jemmeh, Ascalon, Ashdod, Tell Qasile (at modern Tel Aviv), Aphek, Dor, and Tell Abu Hawam.

Tell el-Far'ah (Sharuhén) displays a break between about 1170—60 B. C., after which Philistine pottery begins to appear.⁸¹ Tell Jemmeh provides evidence for an interval between the disappearance of Mycenaean ware from Greece and the introduction of Philistine pottery comparable to that of Tell Beit Mirsim Stratum B_a in its levels 176—183.⁸² At Ascalon a con-

⁸¹ *Tell Beit Mirsim II*, pp. 94 f. F. Petrie, *Beth-pelet II* (London, 1930), pp. 38 f.

⁸² *Tell Beit Mirsim I*, pp. 55, 72 ff.

tinuous burned level separates the stratum containing Mycenaean and Cypro-Phoenician sherds from that containing Philistine pottery.⁸³

While detailed publications of the results of the Ashdod excavation have not yet appeared, a preliminary report suggests that there was a major destruction at the end of the Late Bronze age. This was followed by two pre-Philistine Iron I layers. Superimposed on these were six layers containing Philistine pottery.⁸⁴ This looks like the familiar stratigraphic sequence, first delimited at Tell Beit Mirsim, in Philistia itself, but judgment must be reserved at present.

Aphék gives evidence of being a prosperous Philistine town.⁸⁵ Dor begins its history in the 12th century B. C.⁸⁶ Occupation of Tell Qasile begins with Strata XII and XI from the Philistine period from the end of the 12th to near the end of the 11th century.⁸⁷ Stratum XII and probably Stratum XI ended in destruction.⁸⁸ Stratum XII was characterized by widely scattered occupation, but XI had substantial buildings.

A discussion of the datings of Tell Abu Hawam⁸⁹ has led to the acceptance of Maisler's (Mazar's) reconstruction with

⁸³ *BASOR*, 6, p. 15. *Tell Beit Mirsim I*, p. 54.

⁸⁴ J. L. Swauger, "Archaeological Newsletter No. 33" (Mimeographed; January 1966), p. 2.

⁸⁵ *BASOR*, 11, p. 17.

⁸⁶ *BASOR*, 11, p. 10.

⁸⁷ *Israel Exploration Journal*, I (1951), pp. 68, 73, 126—28.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 130.

⁸⁹ R. W. Hamilton, "Excavations at Tell Abu Hawam," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, 4 (1934), pp. 1—69. Cf. *Tell Beit Mirsim III*, p. 6; *BASOR*, 124, pp. 121—29; 130, pp. 22—26; 138, pp. 34—38.

certain revisions. The discussion is complicated by the dating of Cypriot pottery (mainly from tombs) both used to date and dated by Palestinian strata. This matter is not yet finally settled. Stratum V seems to have been destroyed about 1180 B. C., to be followed immediately by Stratum IVb, which was completely destroyed about 1150. There is a gap in occupation until about 1050, when Stratum IVa begins and continues into the period of the United Monarchy.⁹⁰ Neither Qasile nor Abu Hawam were surrounded by walls in the Judges' period.⁹¹ Tell Abu Hawam IVa showed systematic settlement, but the IVb occupation was sparse.⁹²

In summary, it can be said that the Late Bronze—Iron I division is marked by the destruction of Late Bronze sites and their reestablishment in Iron I, as well as by the occupation of new sites in Iron I. Destructions occurred frequently in the period, two of them near the third quarter of the 11th century in the towns excavated. The source of the new culture in these sites can be implied from the new pottery. (See below.)

II. THE TYPOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Any viable typology must have a stratigraphic base. Otherwise it is little more than stylistic speculation. It also seems methodologically sound to stress that any historical meaning attributed to stylistic changes and developments must be mediated through the stratigraphic context. It is a commonly accepted canon in Palestinian archaeology that the only pottery that can be properly assigned to a specific

⁹⁰ *BASOR*, 124, p. 25; 138, p. 38.

⁹¹ *BASOR*, 124, p. 23.

⁹² *QDAP*, I, p. 67.

group is Philistine ware (but see n. 97). This is further reinforced by the observation that the ceramic forms that bear the exotic Philistine painted motifs are part of the common typological development in Iron Age I. In other words, when the Philistines arrived, they accepted the local ceramic tradition, merely adding decorative motifs that were especially dear to them.

The basis for these observations is the fact that any broad generalizations about drastic stylistic or other typological shifts from period to period tend to be largely unfounded. It has proved unfortunate that Palestinian archaeologists have tended to overstate the case about the differences between Chalcolithic and Early Bronze, Early Bronze and Intermediate Bronze, Late Bronze and Iron I pottery. A striking illustration of the tenacity of certain forms is illustrated by the commonly called Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglet form, an exquisite juglet characterized by white-filled incised decoration. This form is characteristic of the Middle Bronze age, but recently we have found examples of the same form with the same decoration at Bab edh-Dhra' in contexts over a half-millennium earlier than the era in which this form was thought to have first appeared. This form has persisted through several centuries of nonsedentary occupation all over Palestine and survived the introduction of the common use of the potter's wheel during this time.

Professor J. B. Pritchard has recently argued that typologically the Late Bronze tradition in Palestine continues to the time of the coming of the Philistines, at which time there is an obvious cultural break.⁹³ Such a contention is suspect on many

grounds. Such a statement contradicts the views of a number of more experienced archaeologists who emphasize a rather radical break at the end of the Late Bronze era and a continuous development in Iron I. Such a statement cannot be squared with the fact that the Philistine painted ware is basically the indigenous developing ceramic tradition. But, much more cogently, such a statement is contradicted by the stratigraphic evidence, which, outside the coastal cities and the Plain of Jezreel, points so strongly to the thoroughgoing destruction of nearly all important cities in the last half of the 13th century, also by the contrasting poor unfortified occupations that follow, plus the large number of sites with new occupation or with occupation that followed centuries of abandonment. Even if Pritchard's analysis were closely related to the evidence, any historical conclusions would have to subordinate the typological to the stratigraphic evidence. Any argument about the coming of the Israelites or the conquest based on such stylistic analysis would appear entirely gratuitous.

What then is the typological situation? First, the basic general typology is virtually identical in the 13th and 12th centuries B.C. The craters characteristic of the earlier part of the Late Bronze age had virtually gone out of use, and the basic shapes and sizes of jars, jugs, juglets, bowls, cooking pots, and lamps remained the same. (This is true both for the transition between Late Bronze and Iron I and between the beginning of Iron I and Philistine.) The heavy, stepped and squared jar rims in Late Bronze have a clear change in form to the collared jar with rounded rim in Iron I, though the basic form re-

⁹³ J. B. Pritchard, esp. pp. 316—21.

mains the same. The jar bases are also clearly distinguished, for the cupped Late Bronze base gives way to the rounded base in Iron I. The jug rims, trefoil or not, have a regular development in which the ridge (there is also a simple type) moves closer and closer to the rim. The juglets display the same basic form, but the pointed base gives way to a rounded one. The flat plates with simple rims of the Late Bronze age continue to be found in Iron I. The Late Bronze cooking pots and lamps follow a normal development, notably in the stance of the cooking pots and only occasionally in the flared rims of the lamps.

Perhaps more important, but a subject that has not been studied from this point of view, is a distinguishable difference in ware between the two periods. Both periods are characterized by very heavy vessels, but at times the only difference between the simple plates is that the Late Bronze pieces have a cream to white ware, sometimes with a greenish cast, and Iron I plates have more color to the buff-brown-orange range. This is true of the other forms as well, including lamps, within my limited range of observation. The levigation of the clay may also well show some fundamental differences between Late Bronze and Iron I, for the Late Bronze ware seems to be much more finely levigated, and many of the diverse particles characteristic of Iron I ware do not seem to occur in the Late Bronze ware. Many of these differences suggest different kiln traditions.

These are observations of local ware. Excluding the coastal and Jezreel valley sites, it seems that there is a virtual absence of imported wares in the 12th in contrast

to the 13th century. By the 13th century, many of the "imports" were actually poor local imitations, but even these seem to disappear in the 12th century.

All these differences between Late Bronze and Iron I would certainly lead to the conclusion that if it were a choice between a more radical break between Late Bronze and Iron I, or between the beginning of Iron I and the Philistine era, the former would be the choice by all odds, for none of the differences in ware, levigation, and imported wares occurs in the later transition. In any case, though the basic typology remains the same, matters of ware suggest some kind of break such as is made more manifest in the stratigraphic evidence.

III. THE HISTORICAL MEANING OF THE STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Two observations appear in order in regard to *historical* meaning. First, historical meaning includes political, economic, and cultural aspects. The above evidence has been confined primarily to evidence relating to the political sphere. Cultural objects have been ignored, although the possibility of their shedding light on the political situation has not been overlooked. The second observation is that the bearers of history are not simply people but historical groups, such as the Israelites, Philistines, and Canaanites. This observation justifies the focus here on the political sphere. Until the various stratified deposits of archaeological evidence can be confidently attributed to a particular historical group, that evidence can have little specific implication for interpreting economic and cultural history.

By itself, the archaeological evidence in-

icates that there came a point in the history of Palestine when there was a general destruction of a historical group, which, though declining, was still at a relatively high cultural level. An apparently new historical group or groups entered Palestine in large numbers and in a short period (outside of the Valley of Jezreel) substituted a new culture characterized by poorer architecture and lack of fortified communities. Characteristic of this new group is a type of pottery termed Philistine. It is to be noted, however, that in several sites the lower-cultured group appeared before the introduction of this pottery. In addition to the lack of fortification, the frequent destruction levels in the stratification of this period indicate that it is one of political turmoil.

Turning to the primary historical evidence, some light is shed on this evidence. Through these records (including, for example, the Marniptah Stele, the Hieratic Inscription of Lachish, Egyptian materials from Deir 'Alla, Beth-shan, and Megiddo, and Egyptian historical documents) and from archaeological evidence from Cyprus and the Aegean it can be learned that two historical groups were on the move in the general period of this radical cultural break: the Sea Peoples and the Israelites. The Sea Peoples' origins can be traced to Cyprus, where their pottery has been found, dated about 1225—1175 B.C., and from there to coastal Turkey and the Aegean.⁹⁴ For their repulsion by the Egyptians and

their turning to the Palestinian coast, we have the Papyrus Harris⁹⁵ and the Medinet Habu inscriptions and reliefs. The question of whether this evidence will permit distinguishing Philistine- and Israelite-inspired conflagrations is a matter of controversy. The negative view is reflected by Noth (see introductory remarks) and is also expressed by Olga Tufnell in *Lachish IV*.⁹⁶ Albright presses the evidence further and establishes the relationship between the Philistines and Philistine pottery and then, through the records of Rameses III at the Medinet Habu temple and at Beth-shan, sets an absolute date of about 1170 for the coming of the Philistines to the coast of Palestine and suggests that their pottery would first appear at Tell Beit Mirsim about 1150 B.C.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt IV* (Chicago, 1907), p. 201.

⁹⁶ *Text*, pp. 36—38.

⁹⁷ *Tell Beit Mirsim I*, pp. 53—58. His arguments for the association of the Philistines and Philistine painted pottery are in part based on evidence of too localized an occurrence of the painted tradition in the south. The painted ware has subsequently been discovered in the north at Megiddo, Dor, and 'Affuleh (*BASOR*, 124, p. 23). These discoveries suggest that the painted tradition is to be associated with the Sea Peoples generally, not precisely the Philistines. They also make any postulation of a Sea People invading at this time without such a pottery tradition less likely. For the relation of this tradition with Late Mycenaean pottery see Heurtley's remarks in *QDAP*, 5, pp. 90 ff. Evidence of Sea Peoples in Palestine in the latter part of the 13th century B.C. is mounting, but none of it points to an invasion of Palestine at this time. Some depredation along the coast is to be expected at a time when Sea Peoples were severely pressing Egypt and Phoenicia, but there is no evidence of any kind for an invasion of inland Palestine this early. If there are Philistine sherds in Megiddo VII and if the Deir 'Alla tablets do reflect the presence of Sea People, this suggests small peaceful infiltrating groups, not destructive invaders.

⁹⁴ J. Prignaud, "Caftorim et Kerétim," *Revue Biblique*, 71 (1964), pp. 215—29. Cf. Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine*, pp. 114 f. A summary of some recent literature on the Sea Peoples that is apparently unaware of Prignaud's work is G. E. Wright, "Fresh Evidence for the Philistine Story," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 29 (1966), pp. 70—78.

Aside from the establishment of an absolute date (and from the Biblical literary evidence), it seems that the very demonstration of a phase of occupation between the destruction of the Late Bronze culture and the establishment of the Philistine influence as evidenced by their pottery argues for an Israelite occupation. To posit an invasion by a Sea People without their characteristic painted pottery seems unlikely,⁹⁸ as does its attribution to a Canaanite group in the light of such radical differences between the strata (unless a "revolt of the masses" is introduced). Since no pottery tradition has been associated with the Israelites (or with any other historical group except the Sea Peoples), there is no objection to attributing this occupation to them, especially in view of the reference of the Marniptah Stele.

There have been three major objections to this attribution. The first is Noth's objection that there is not enough archaeological evidence of a clear nature to separate out such a precise phase as B₁ at Tell Beit Mirsim because of the poverty and lack of stratification in this period. This point was at least partially valid at the time it was made.⁹⁹ Now, however, a wealth of archaeological evidence seems to demonstrate clearly that all over Palestine there are tells that clearly have a characteristically poor occupation after the massive destruction of the Late Bronze site and before the coming of the Philistines. Hazor is very clear on this point, and Deir 'Alla, the most carefully excavated site yet dug in Palestine, provides

⁹⁸ Cf. n. 97.

⁹⁹ The primary evidence consisted of two silos from 'Ain Shems (n. 65) and eight or nine from Tell Beit Mirsim (n. 71). Cf. *Tell Beit Mirsim I*, pp. 58 ff.

exactly the same evidence. Now there is the possibility of similar evidence at Gezer and Ashdod.

The next objection, also made by Professor Noth, is that the "conquest" was a peaceful invasion by small groups living in isolated areas. The stratigraphic picture, however, does not indicate a peaceful period; and if the pre-Philistine major destructions are not to be attributed to the Israelites, to whom are they to be attributed? The cities destroyed in the last half of the 13th (and perhaps the beginning of the 12th) century, including the vast site of Hazor, the resettled towns with new patterns of occupation, the settlement of many unoccupied sites—these can hardly be disassociated and attributed to random tribal movements. How is the destruction of the Canaanite fortress of Lachish at nearly the same time as that of Tell Beit Mirsim C to be explained? The Philistines had not yet arrived on the scene. The Marniptah Stele mentions retribution against neighboring cities, but there is no mention of Lachish. A small tribe looking for *Lebensraum* would hardly have attempted to take so strong a fortress and could hardly have succeeded. The most satisfying explanation of the problem of the destruction of Lachish, Hazor, and other towns similarly destroyed is a concerted effort on the part of a sizable group of Israelites.

A third objection maintains that one does not need a sizable group of Israelites but that the coming of a small group of Israelites triggered a revolt of the villagers and the oppressed urban population against their Canaanite overlords. But the massive destructions and the complete reorientations of fairly prosperous cities could hardly

have resulted so consistently, I would expect, if the primary matter was the elimination of a few Canaanite overlords. The employment of so many silos (not known in the Late Bronze age), the new kind of ceramic ware, the architectural poverty, and the new occupations on so many sites combine to suggest a social change that is more than the result of social upheaval. These things point to a large group of intruders. The "revolt of the masses" seems to be a modern construct forced on ancient traditions in opposition to the archaeological evidence.

Last, but not least, the "conquest" by a sizable group is reflected in the Biblical record. It is hard to see how this tradition could have been invented in later times, which could be expected to expand traditions related to the founding of the kingdom by David but hardly to have invented a conquest narrative. This Biblical picture may be stressed without pressing any of its details. The literary stratification is diverse, but it is consistent in indicating a substantial conquest in a rather short period of time. To deny the Joshua tribes the destruction of a site such as Hazor, when there is such a striking coincidence of literary and archaeological evidence, would seem to involve a highly questionable methodology.

It should be pointed out that this fact should in no way prejudice the case for or against the methods used in developing this reconstruction. They must stand or fall on their own merits. In fairness, this should be also observed in regard to Noth. The impression given in Albright's¹⁰⁰ and especially in Bright's criticism of Noth is that it stems, at least in part, from a horror

¹⁰⁰ *BASOR*, 74, p. 12.

of nihilism regarding Biblical sources for this period. That Bright asks, "Has Noth succeeded in presenting a satisfying picture of the origins and early history of Israel?"¹⁰¹ seems out of place as he begins a criticism of *method*. The end does not justify or condemn the means. Persons not acquainted with the evidence supporting these Biblical traditions might easily raise the charge of a new Fundamentalism; indeed Wright has been so charged by Johannes Hempel.¹⁰²

If the general picture from stratified evidence, dated and explicated by the primary historical sources, fits well with the general picture of the conquest in the Biblical traditions, how far can the Biblical materials be used to further explicate the archaeological evidence? Cases in point from our period are the matter of connecting the series of destructions toward the middle of the 11th century with the Philistine victory at Ebenezer, linking the destruction of Hazor to Joshua's northern campaign, and relating the Shechem evidence to the theory of "preconquest" Hebrew peoples.

First, it must be admitted that to some extent the dating of these destructions was made in previous decades precisely in the light of the Biblical connections. Yet,

¹⁰¹ J. Bright, *Early Israel in Recent History Writing*, (London, 1956), pp. 83 ff. This seems to stem, at least in part, from a common misinterpretation of Noth. The fact that Noth maintains (as does the writer) that it is improper to speak of the history of *Israel* before the formation of the amphictyonic league does not of itself involve any judgment about the extent to which earlier traditions are based on a historical substratum. In this light it might have been preferable to break with traditional terminology and to refer to the sequence: Canaanites, Joshua tribes, Philistines.

¹⁰² In his review of Wright's *Biblical Archaeology* in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 70 (1958), pp. 167—70.

THE CONQUEST OF PALESTINE

more recent and clear evidence seems clearly to vindicate the chronological precision thus secured. How far can the method of treating the Biblical traditions as reliable historical documents, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be admitted by the archaeologist or the historian? This is basically a matter of judgment. If a critical construction derived from maximal utilization of primary historical documents and archaeological evidence so closely corresponds to the Biblical-historical tradition, would not a failure to employ this principle be *contra scientiam*? On the other hand, we dare not minimize the danger that this method may turn into an assumption which, in

dealing with either Biblical or archaeological material, may override systematic and critical examination of the evidence. The voice of the Alt school provides the criticism that forces followers of Albright to face seriously the possibility that they have gone beyond the province of sound judgment in their historical reconstructions. Yet this writer tends to feel more comfortable in the Albright tradition, if this basically means constructing the most detailed correlative hypothesis permitted by the evidence, for such reconstructions make possible the immediate synthesis of new material, no matter to what extent it transforms the hypothesis.

Jerusalem, Jordan