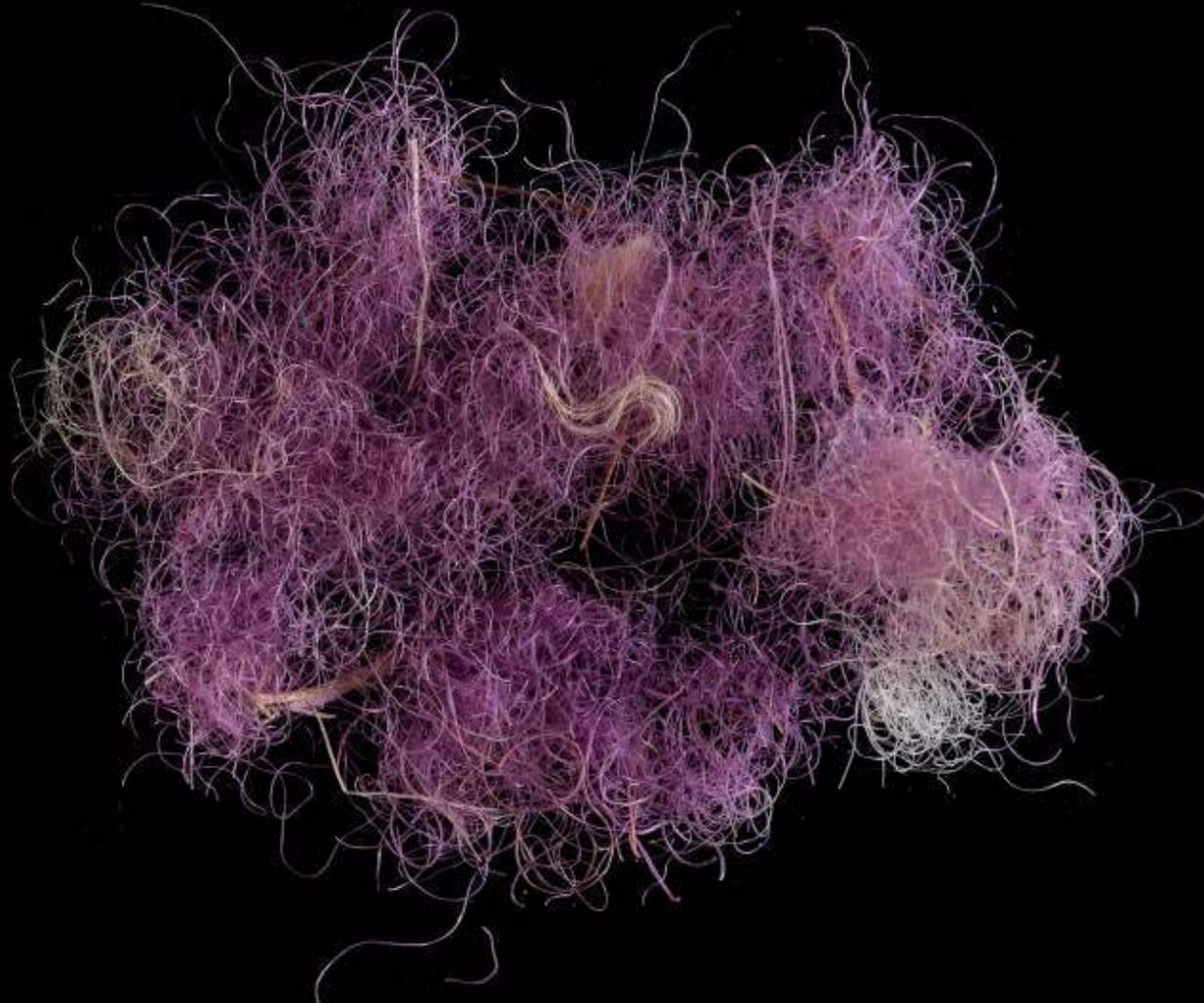


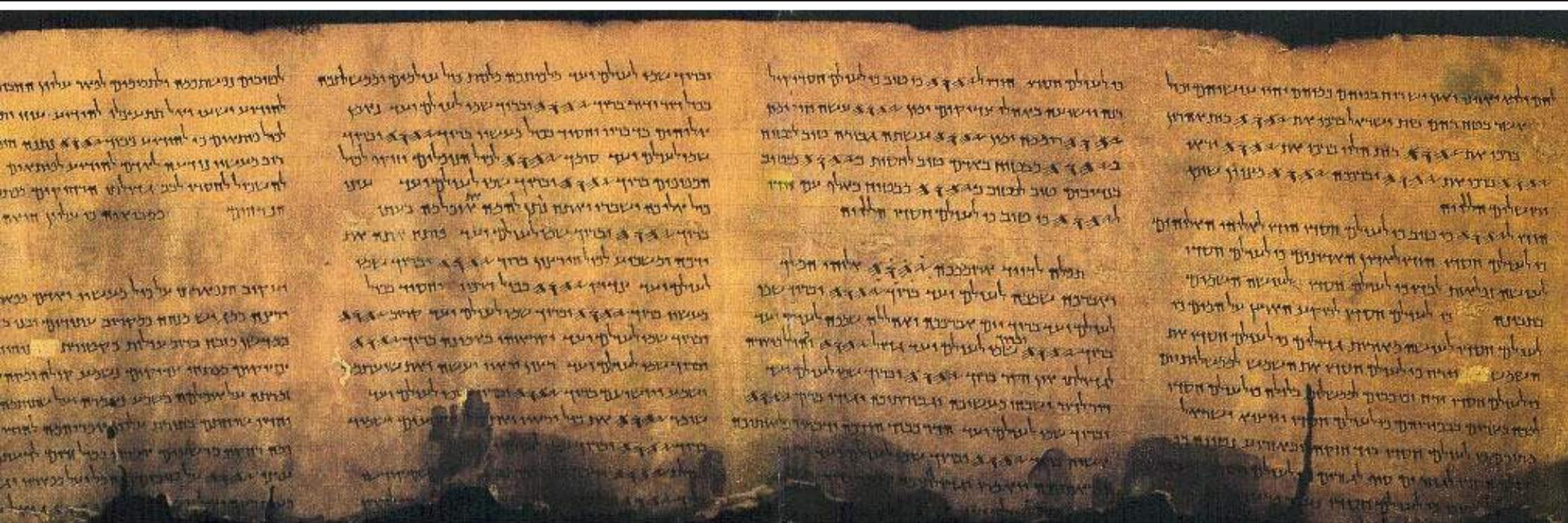
Evidence For Old Testament History: From Abraham to Solomon



Purple textile fibers from 1,000 BC excavated in the Timna Valley. Photo: Dafna Gazit/Israel Antiquities Authority

Peter S. Williams – www.peterswilliams.com

#1: Richard Dawkins & Old Testament History



The Dead Sea Scrolls - Psalms Scroll

Israel Antiquities Authority / Library of Congress (www.loc.gov/exhibits/scrolls/scr1.html)

Professor Richard Dawkins



© Michael Willems / MW Photo

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*Outgrowing
God*

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE
TO ATHEISM

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- Asserts: 'biblical scholars don't take [the Old Testament] seriously as history.' ⁻⁴⁸
- Asserts that this or that OT story makes 'an extraordinary claim requiring extraordinary evidence.'
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- That's a whole lot of asserting for a book that's supposed to be encouraging young people to ask for evidence...

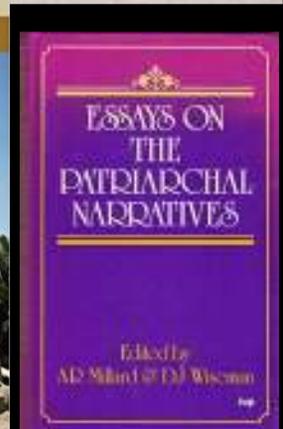
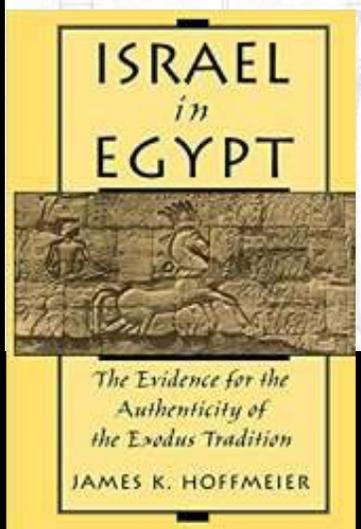
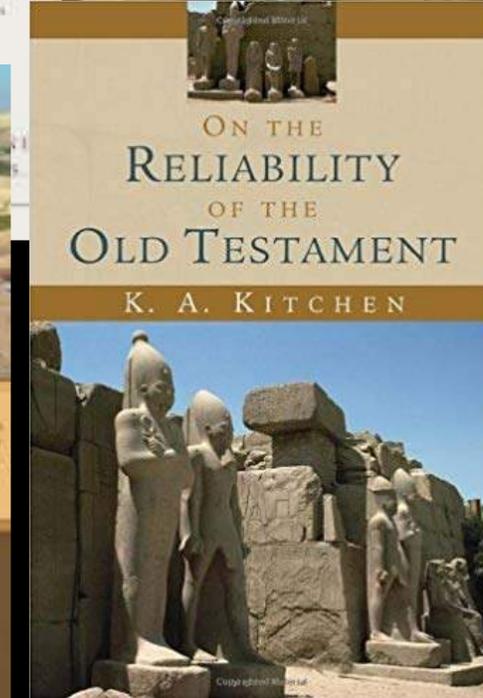
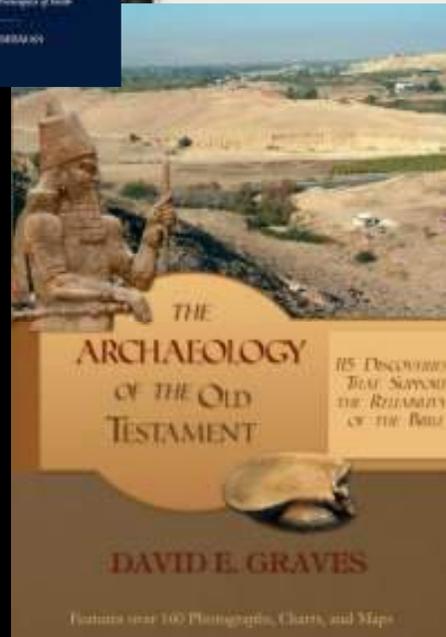
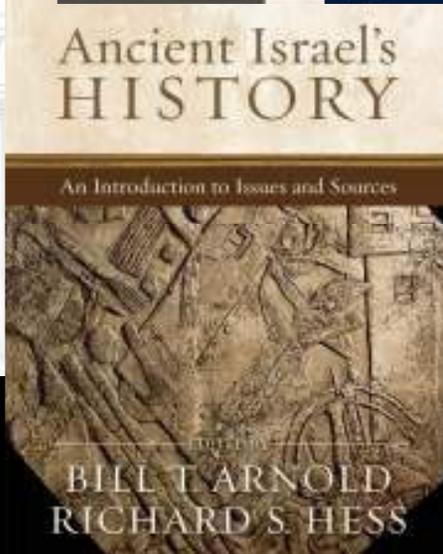
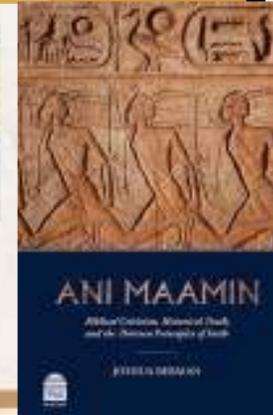
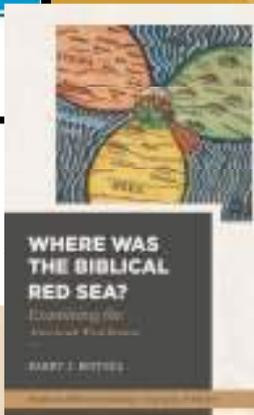
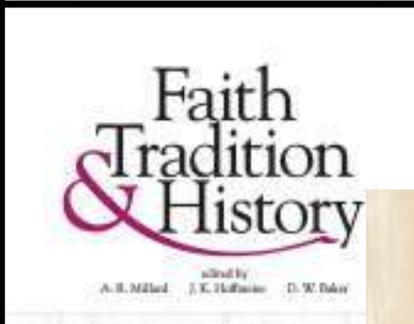
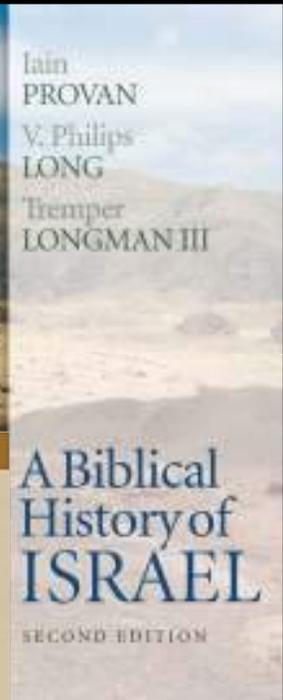
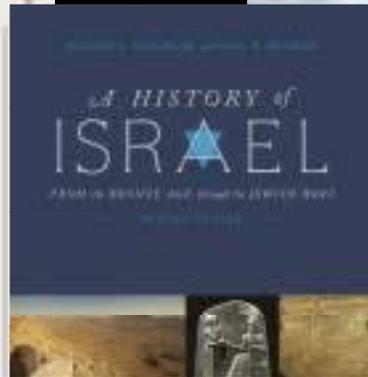
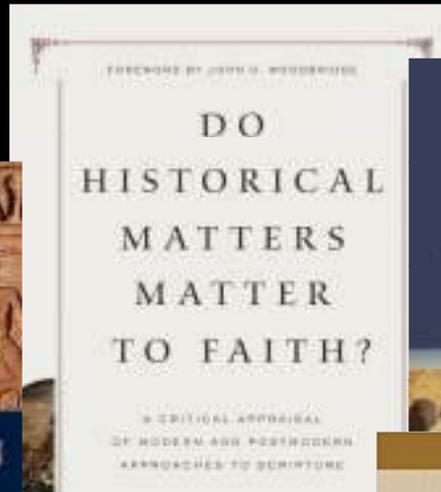
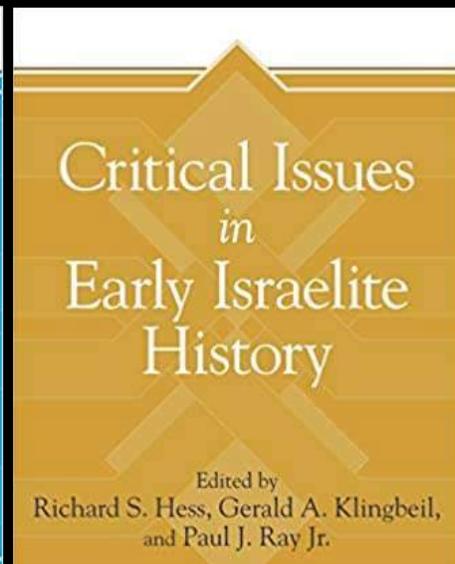
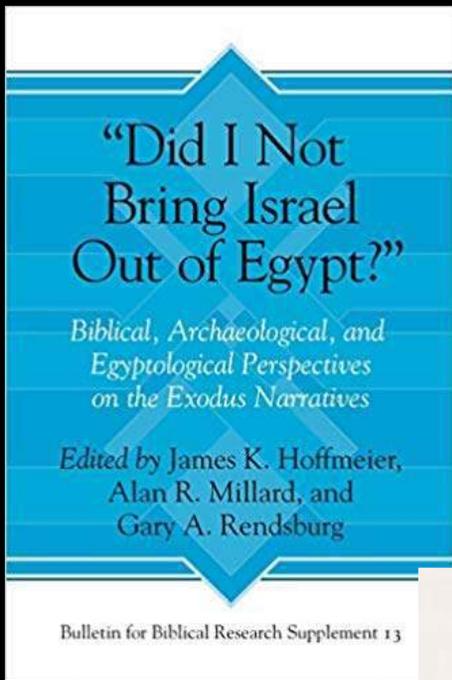
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Dawkins is cribbing from Carl Sagan, who was cribbing from David Hume...

Timothy McGrew:

The Argumentum Sagani

- (1) Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.
- (2) The claim that a miracle has occurred is extraordinary.

Therefore,

- (3) Any evidence supporting it ought to be extraordinary as well.
- (4) I'm not sure what I mean by "extraordinary."
- (5) But whatever you come up with, it's not going to work.

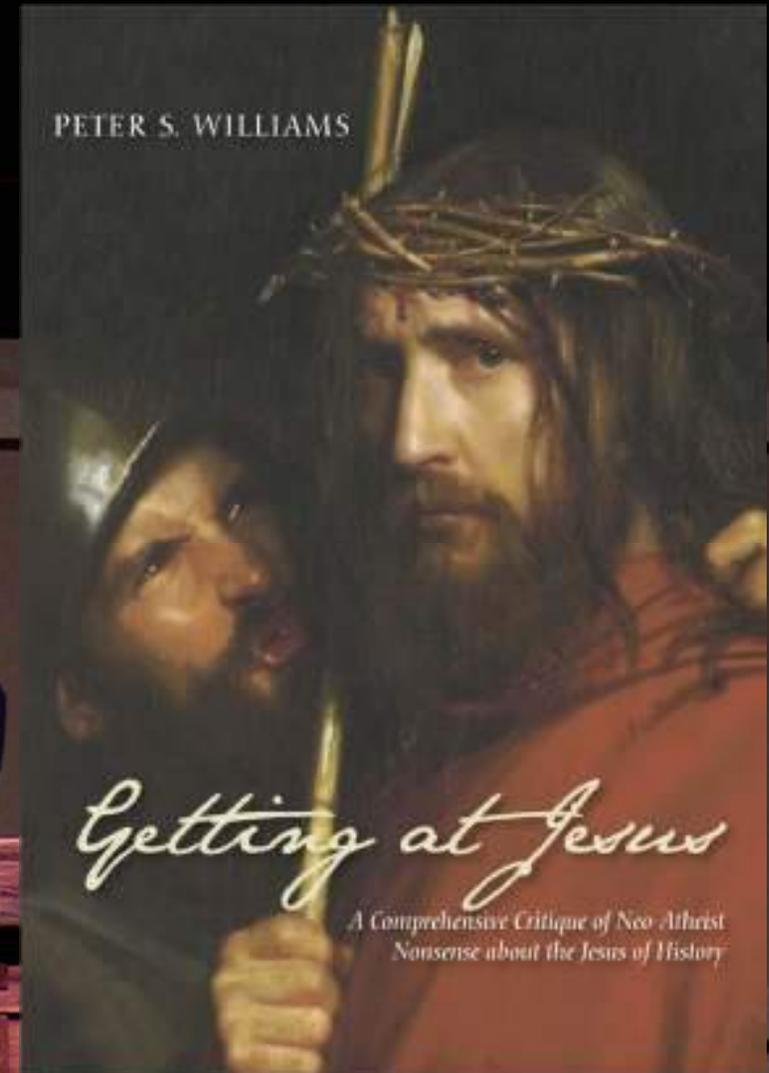
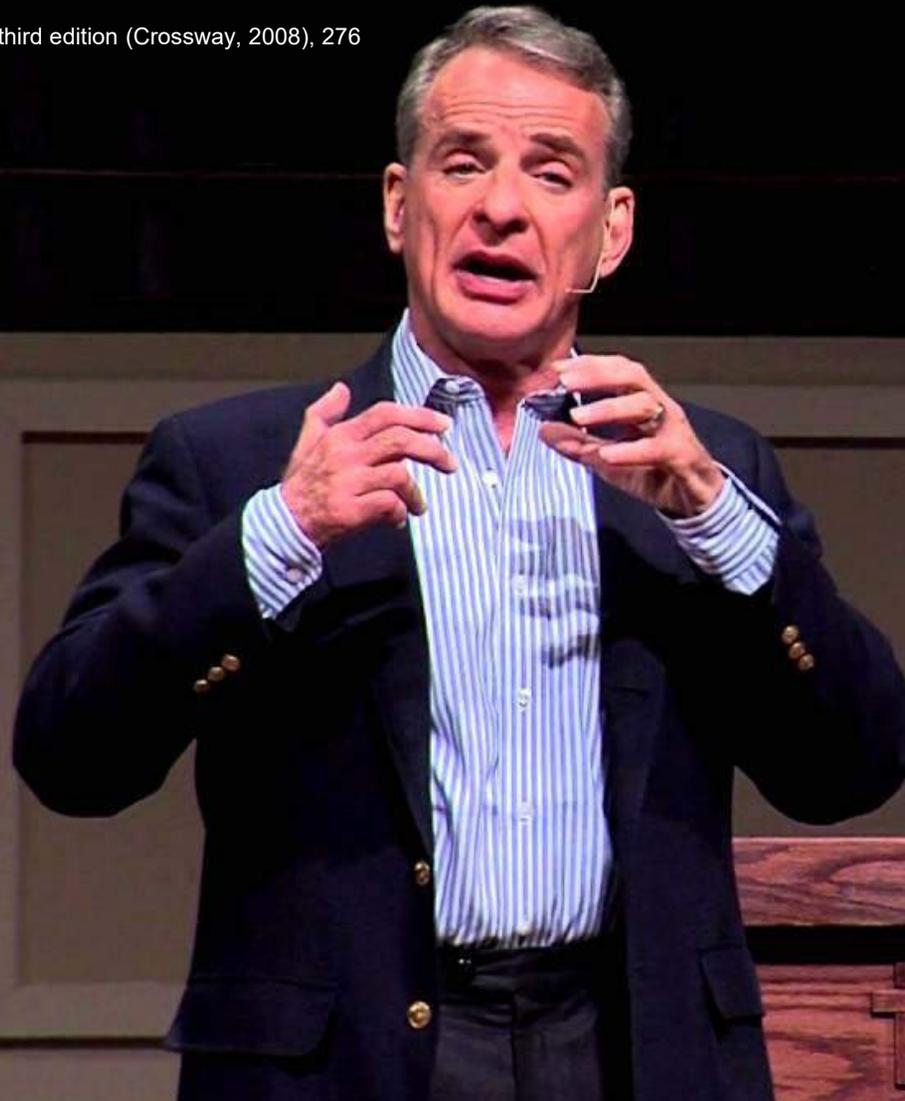
Therefore,

- (6) No one is justified in believing any miracle claim.

William Lane Craig:

‘the fallaciousness of Hume’s reasoning has been recognized by the majority of philosophers writing on the subject today.’

- *Reasonable Faith*, third edition (Crossway, 2008), 276



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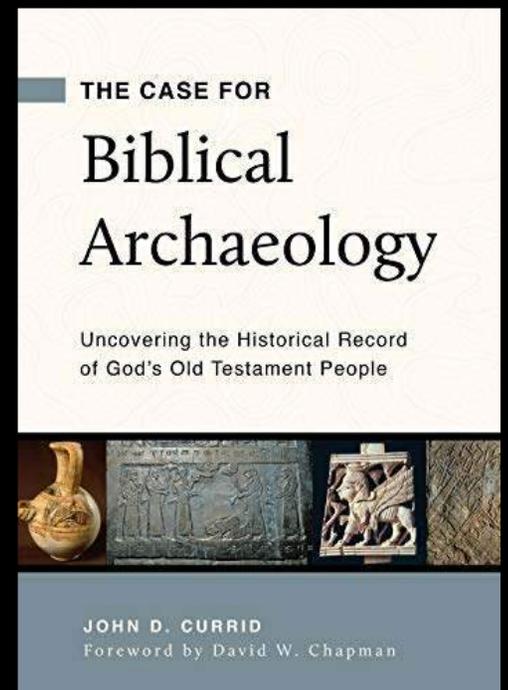
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We have a *very limited access to the past* through the known chain of its effects:

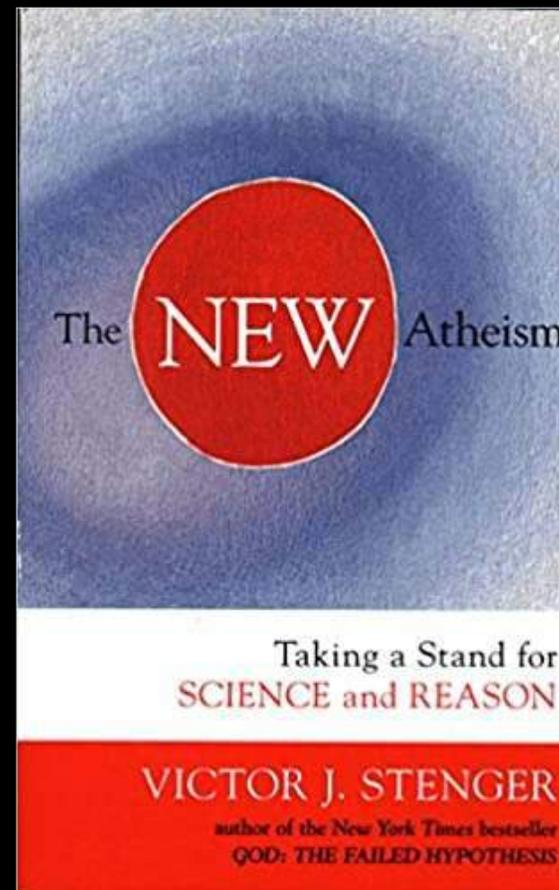
- **Only 35 of 142 books of Roman history written by Livy** (c. 59/64 BC – c. 12/17 AD) **have survived** (in c. 20 manuscripts, the oldest of which dates from the 4th century AD)
- **John D. Currid: ‘In Israel... More than 6,000 ancient sites have been surveyed, yet less than 500 have been excavated. Of those, less than 50 have been exposed to major excavation work.’** - *The Case For Biblical Archaeology* (P&R, 2020), 6.



- Arguments from silence make an undisciplined shift from the absence of evidence for or against a proposition to the truth or falsity of that proposition.
- As atheist **Victor Stenger** warned, absence of evidence is only evidence of absence 'when the evidence should be there and is not.' - *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (Prometheus, 2010), 58.



Photo by: Vicstenger



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History = ‘(the study of or a record of) past events considered together...’ – Cambridge Dictionary



- Philosopher **Daniel Little**: ‘the historian's task is to shed light on the what, why, and how of the past, based on inferences from the evidence of the present.’ - <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/history/>

Archaeology = the systematic study of the material remains of past human behavior



'The primary goal of archaeology is to discover, observe, preserve, and record the buried remains of antiquity and to use them to help reconstruct ancient life.' – John D. Currid, *The Case For Biblical Archaeology* (P&R, 2020), 5.

Minimalism vs. Maximalism

Dr Michael S. Heiser:

For those unfamiliar with the 'minimalist' vs. 'maximalist' debate over biblical archaeology, the former basically believed the OT has little or no historical value, as it was entirely written during or after the exile [i.e. 6th century B.C]. Maximalists, on the other hand, disagree, but on what I'd call a continuum of optimism about the biblical text as a historical source.

- <http://drmsh.com/archaeology-and-the-old-testament-minimalism-and-maximalism/>

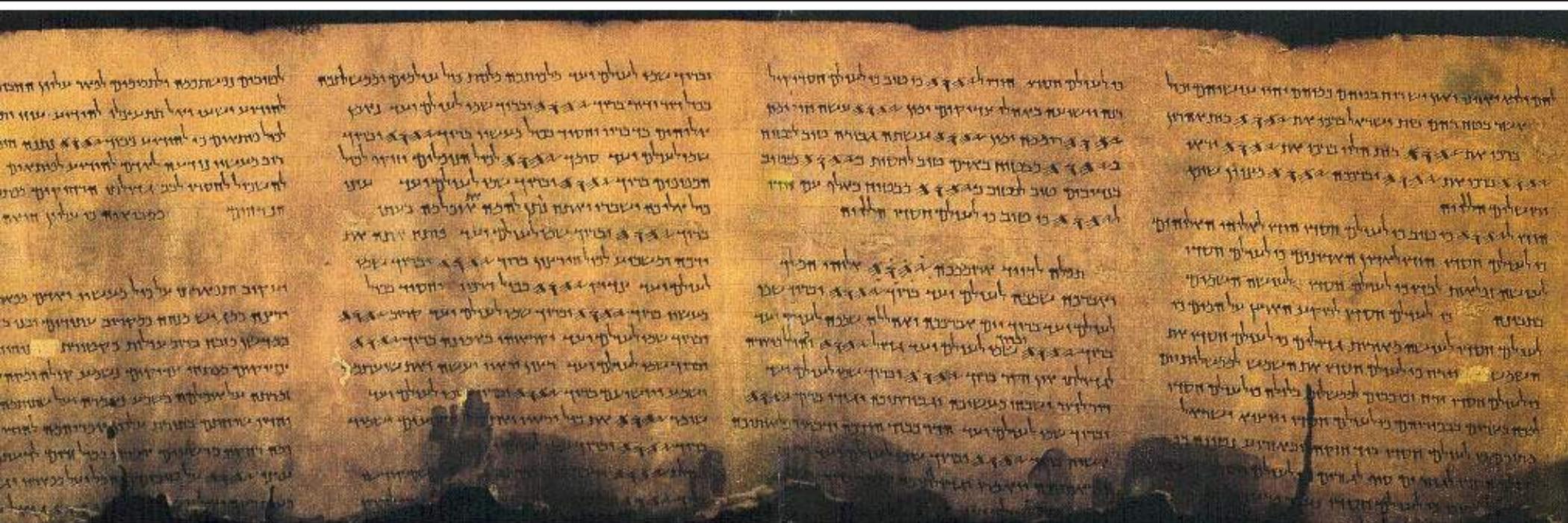


Embarrassing heroes

The Old Testament repeatedly passes the historical *criteria of embarrassment* by being brutally honest about its leading protagonists:

- *Moses* committed murder / manslaughter, tried to avoid God's calling & is prevented from entering the Promised Land because he disobeys God
- *King David* committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged for her husband to be in the front line of a battle so he'd be killed
- *The nation of Israel* is descended from slaves and repeatedly fails to live up to its covenant with God

#2: Patriarchs



The Dead Sea Scrolls - Psalms Scroll

Why no Baal or Jerusalem?

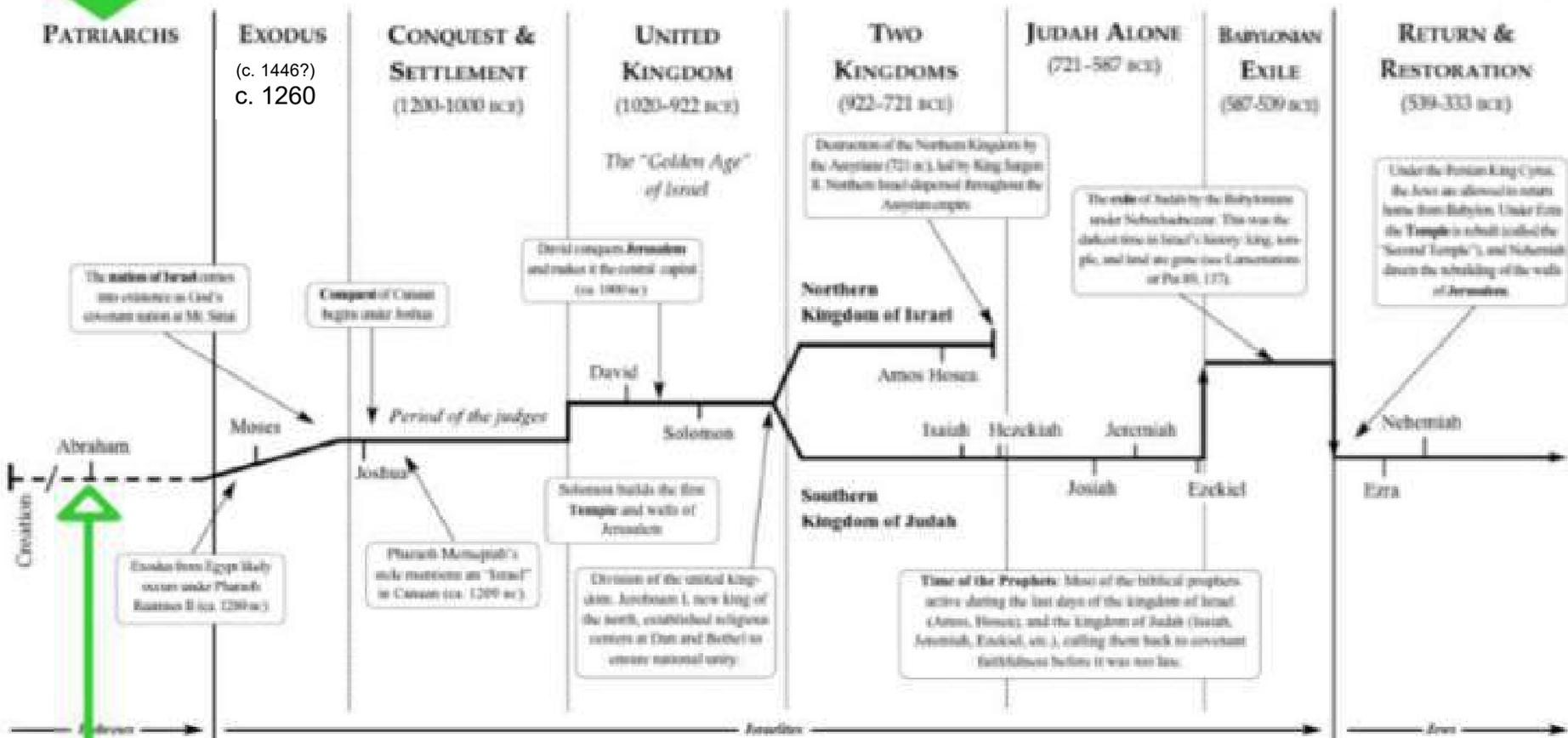
Gordon Wenham ("The religion of the patriarchs" in *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives* in A.R. Millard & D.J. Wiseman, ed.'s. Leicester, IVP, 1980, 185):

the complete absence of Baal from the patriarchal tradition points to its antiquity. In the second half of the second millennium BC Baal took over from El as the leading god in the west Semitic pantheon, yet he is never mentioned in Genesis. This is intelligible if the patriarchal tradition originated before about 1500 BC, but not if it comes from later times

Since Jerusalem existed in patriarchal times, the failure of the patriarchal narratives to mention Jerusalem as a center of worship 'is most easily explained if the patriarchal traditions not only originated, but were committed to writing, before Jerusalem became the principal cultic center', around the beginning of the first millennium B.C



The Old Testament Story†



This way to Jesus
c. 6 BC

Abraham.
c. 1800 B.C ff.



Biblical Geography



Genesis 11:31: 'Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.'

THE MIGRATION OF ABRAHAM

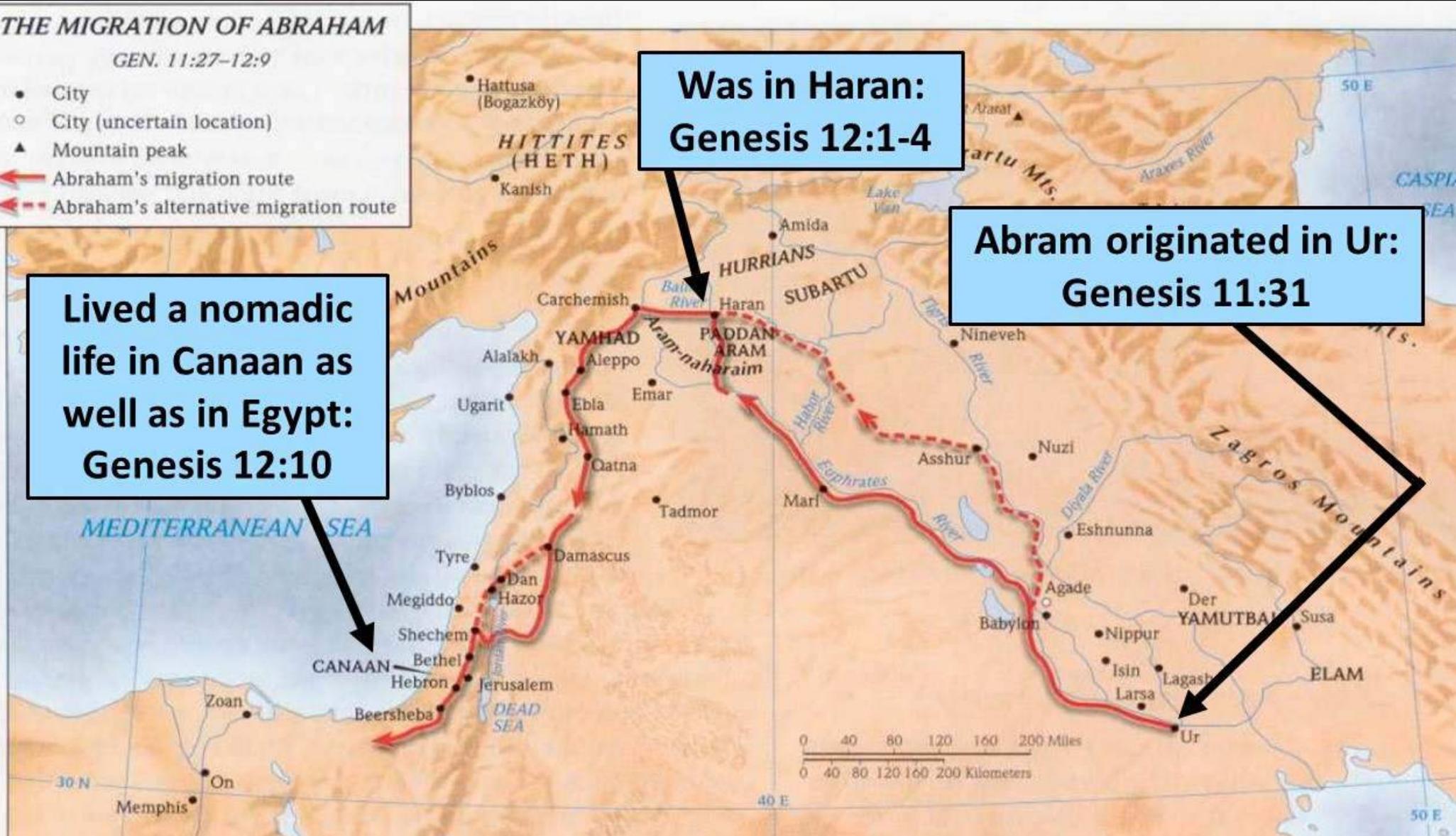
GEN. 11:27-12:9

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Abraham's migration route
- Abraham's alternative migration route

**Was in Haran:
Genesis 12:1-4**

**Abram originated in Ur:
Genesis 11:31**

**Lived a nomadic
life in Canaan as
well as in Egypt:
Genesis 12:10**



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Dawkins asserts that Abraham's camels are an 'anachronism' because 'the camel was not domesticated until many centuries after Abraham is supposed to have died.' – *Outgrowing God*, 53.

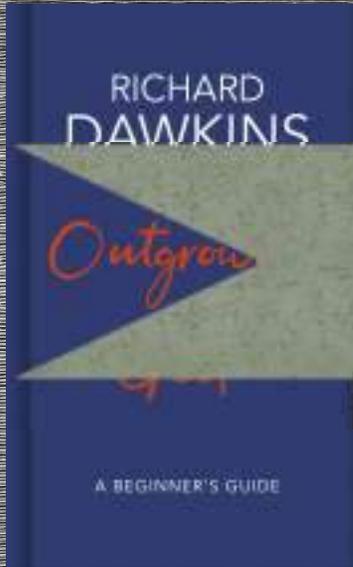


Dawkins asserts that Abraham's camels are

'monism' because

Ignorance

after



The Big Bang Theory (Season 7, 2013-2014)

- **Howard:** We can't show up to your mom's empty-handed. We should bring something.
- **Sheldon:** I already am. I'm bringing the gift of knowledge.
- **Howard:** Oh boy.
- **Sheldon:** Despite what her bible says, recent archaeological studies indicate that although camels are referenced in the Old Testament, they didn't exist in the Middle East until hundreds of years later.
- **Howard:** I was gonna say we'd pick up a cake or a pie, but an insult to her faith is always thoughtful.

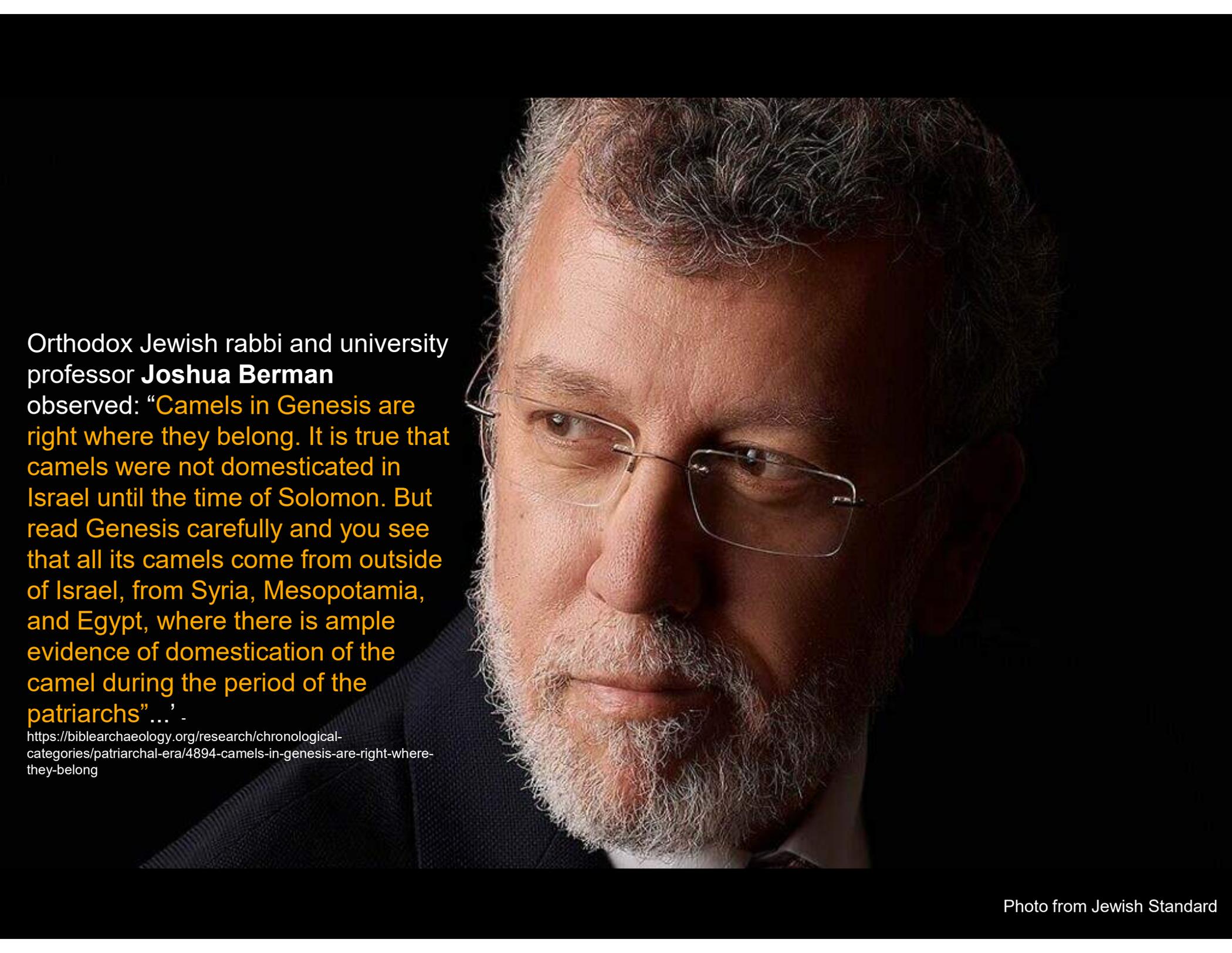


Bryant Wood: ‘A study of camel bones from the copper-mining site of Timna in Israel... concluded the use of domesticated camels at Timna, “was not earlier than the last third of the 10th century BCE” (Tel Aviv 40 [2013]: 277)... *New York Times* reporter John Noble Wilford picked up on this and penned the article “Camels Had No Business in Genesis” in the February 10, 2014, issue...’

- <https://biblearchaeology.org/research/chronological-categories/patriarchal-era/4894-camels-in-genesis-are-right-where-they-belong>



Wilford: ‘The annual camel race in the desert of Wadi Rum, Jordan, in 2007. Radiocarbon dating was used to pinpoint the earliest known domesticated camels in Israel to the 10th century B.C.— decades after the kingdom of David, according to the Bible.’



Orthodox Jewish rabbi and university professor **Joshua Berman** observed: “**Camels in Genesis are right where they belong. It is true that camels were not domesticated in Israel until the time of Solomon. But read Genesis carefully and you see that all its camels come from outside of Israel, from Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, where there is ample evidence of domestication of the camel during the period of the patriarchs**” ...’ -

<https://biblearchaeology.org/research/chronological-categories/patriarchal-era/4894-camels-in-genesis-are-right-where-they-belong>

Dr K.A. Kitchen: 'It is often asserted that the mention of camels and of their use is an anachronism in Genesis. This charge is simply not true, as there is both [written] and archaeological evidence for knowledge and use of this animal in the early second millennium B.C. and even earlier.'

- *The Ancient Orient and Old Testament.*



In his study of the domestication of camels, **Professor K. Martin Heide** concludes:

‘The archaeological evidence points to the fact that the Bactrian camel was domesticated before the dromedary and was put into use by the middle of the 3rd millennium or earlier. The gradual spread of the Bactrian camel... seems to have reached the Mesopotamian civilization sporadically by the middle of the 3rd millennium and more frequently at the end of the 3rd / beginning of the 2nd millennium... The archaeological and inscriptional evidence allows at least the domesticated Bactrian camel to have existed at Abraham’s time.’

- “The Domestication of the Camel: Biological, Archaeological and Inscriptional Evidence from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel and Arabia, and Literary Evidence from the Hebrew Bible” -

www.academia.edu/2065314/The_Domestication_of_the_Camel_Biological_Archaeological_and_Inscriptional_Evidence_from_Mesopotamia_Egypt_Israel_and_Arabia_and_Literary_Evidence_from_the_Hebrew_Bible_in_Ugarit Forschungen 42_2010_Münster_Ugarit-Verlag_2011_331_384

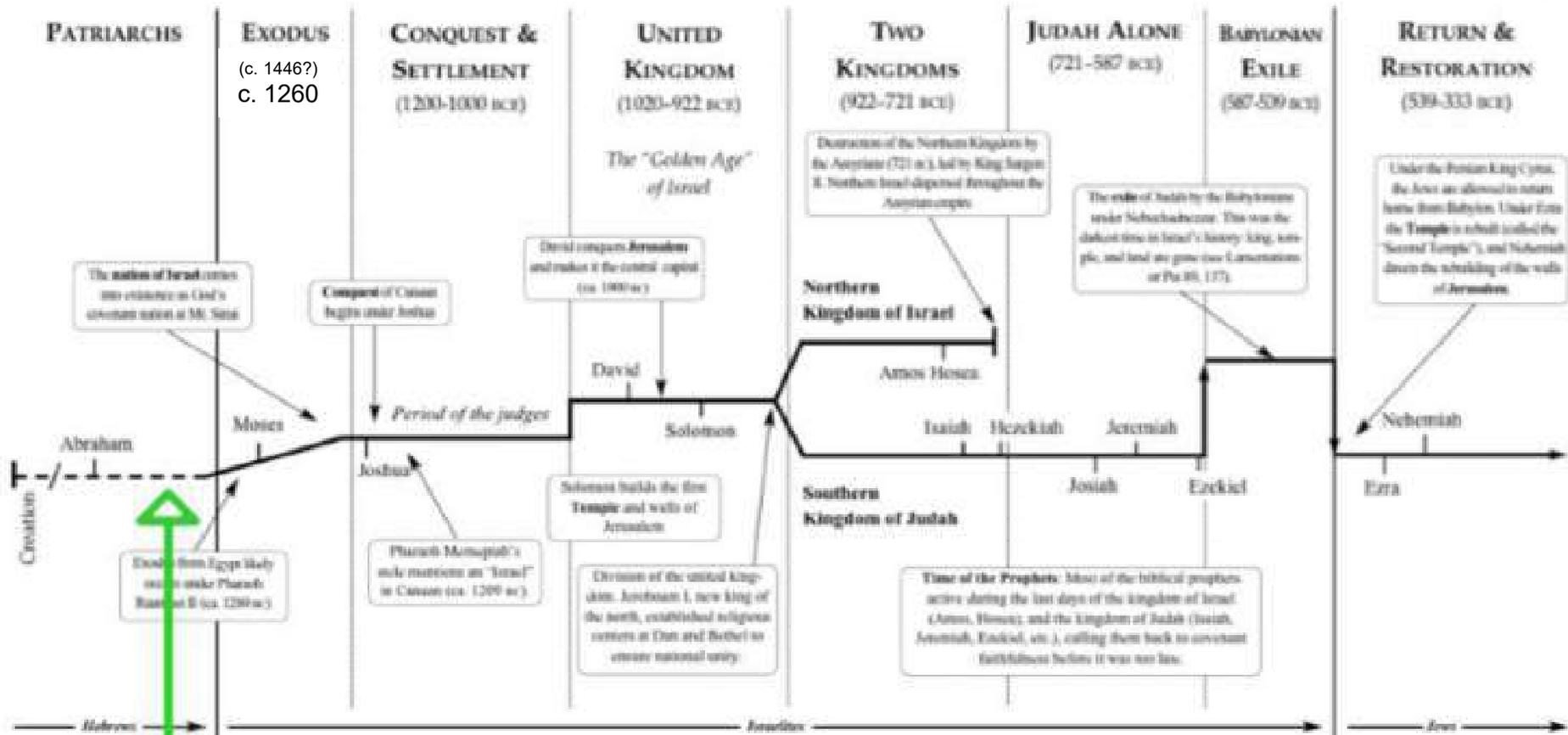
- See also: Kenneth Kitchen, *On The Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 2003), 339.
- Mark W. Chavalas, ‘Did Abraham Ride a Camel?’ *Biblical Archaeology Review* 44 (2018): 52, 64–65.



S. D. O. G.

H. PISAN

The Old Testament Story[†]



This way to Jesus
c. 6 BC

Joseph.
18th century B.C

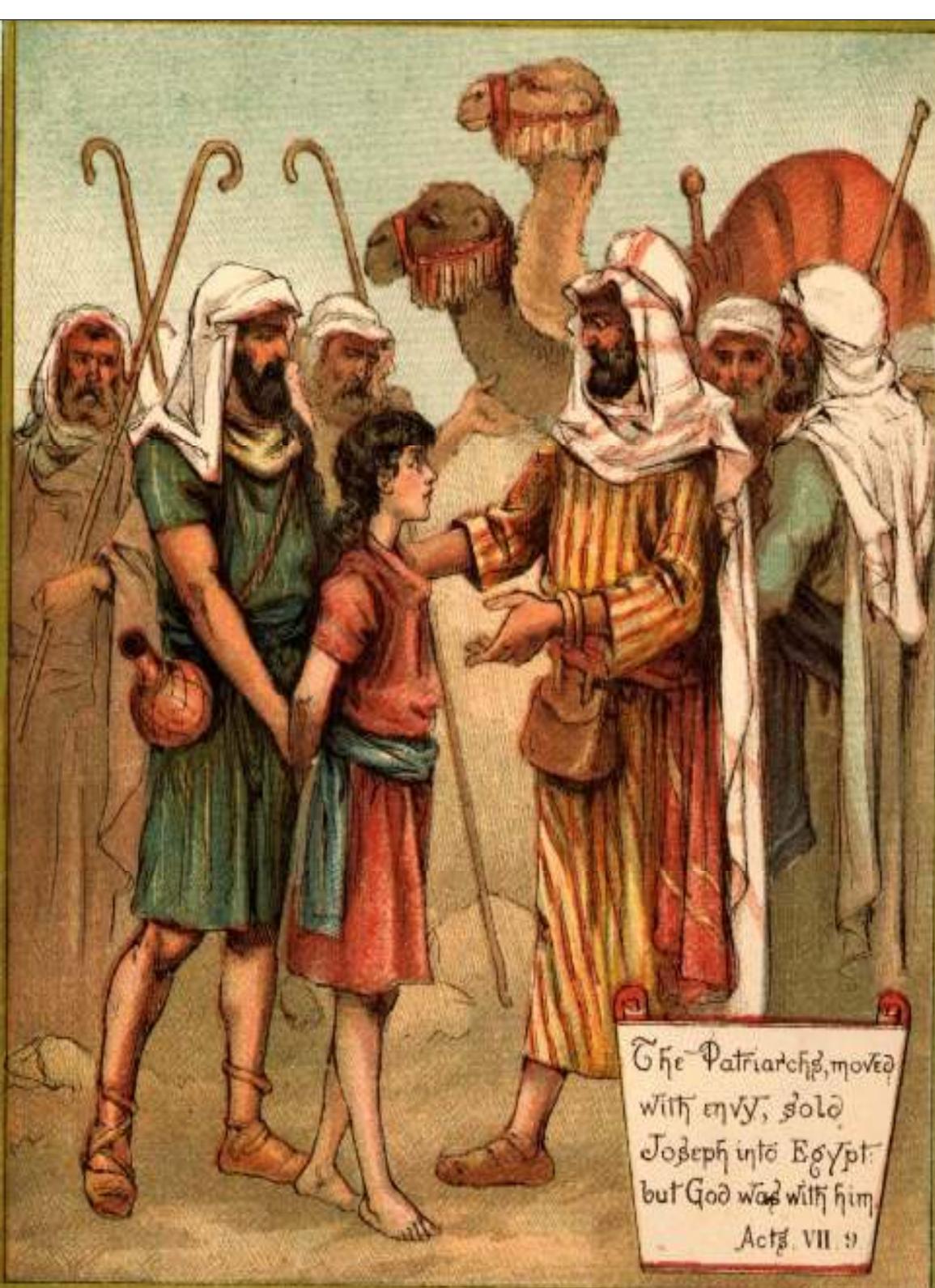


Biblical Geography



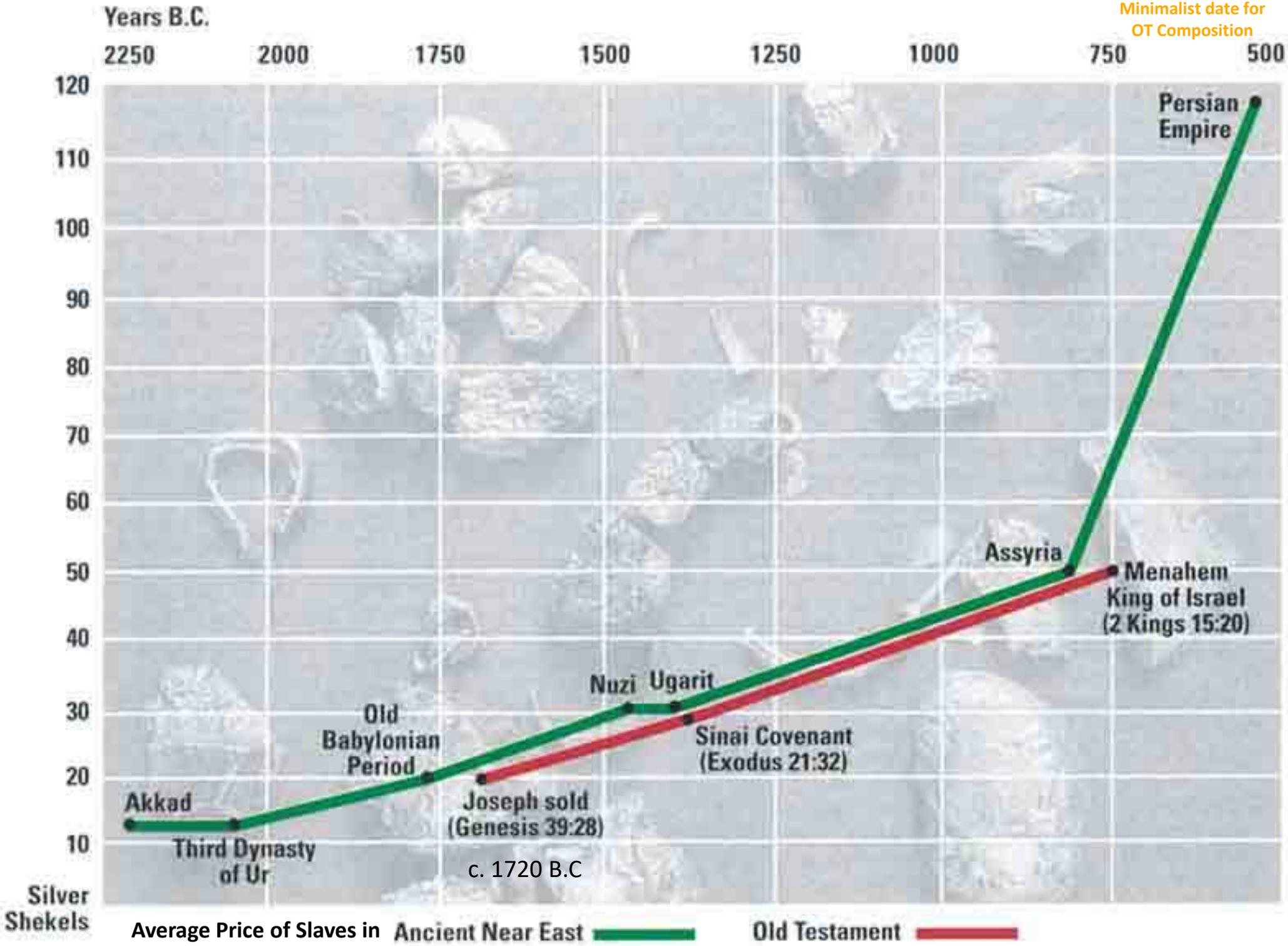
Joseph sold into slavery - Genesis 37:

Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.' And his brothers listened to him... And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for **twenty shekels of silver**. They took Joseph to Egypt



The Patriarchs, moved
with envy, sold
Joseph into Egypt;
but God was with him.
Acts. VII. 9

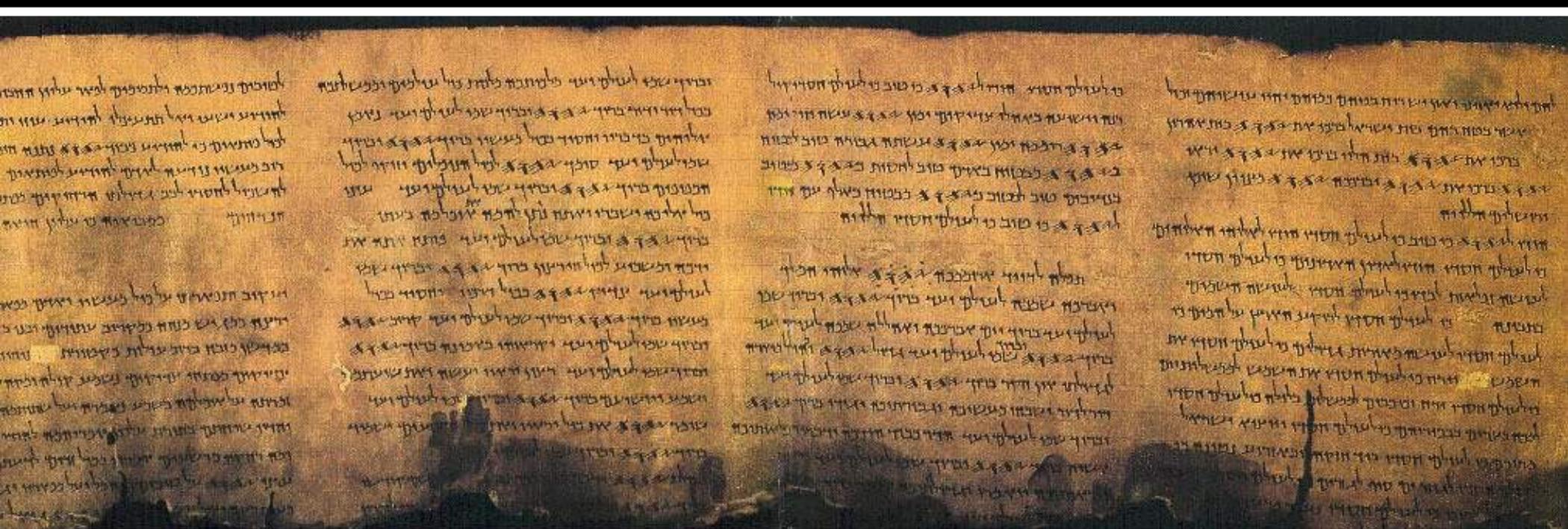
Minimalist date for OT Composition



Silver Shekels

Average Price of Slaves in Ancient Near East — Old Testament —

#3: Exodus

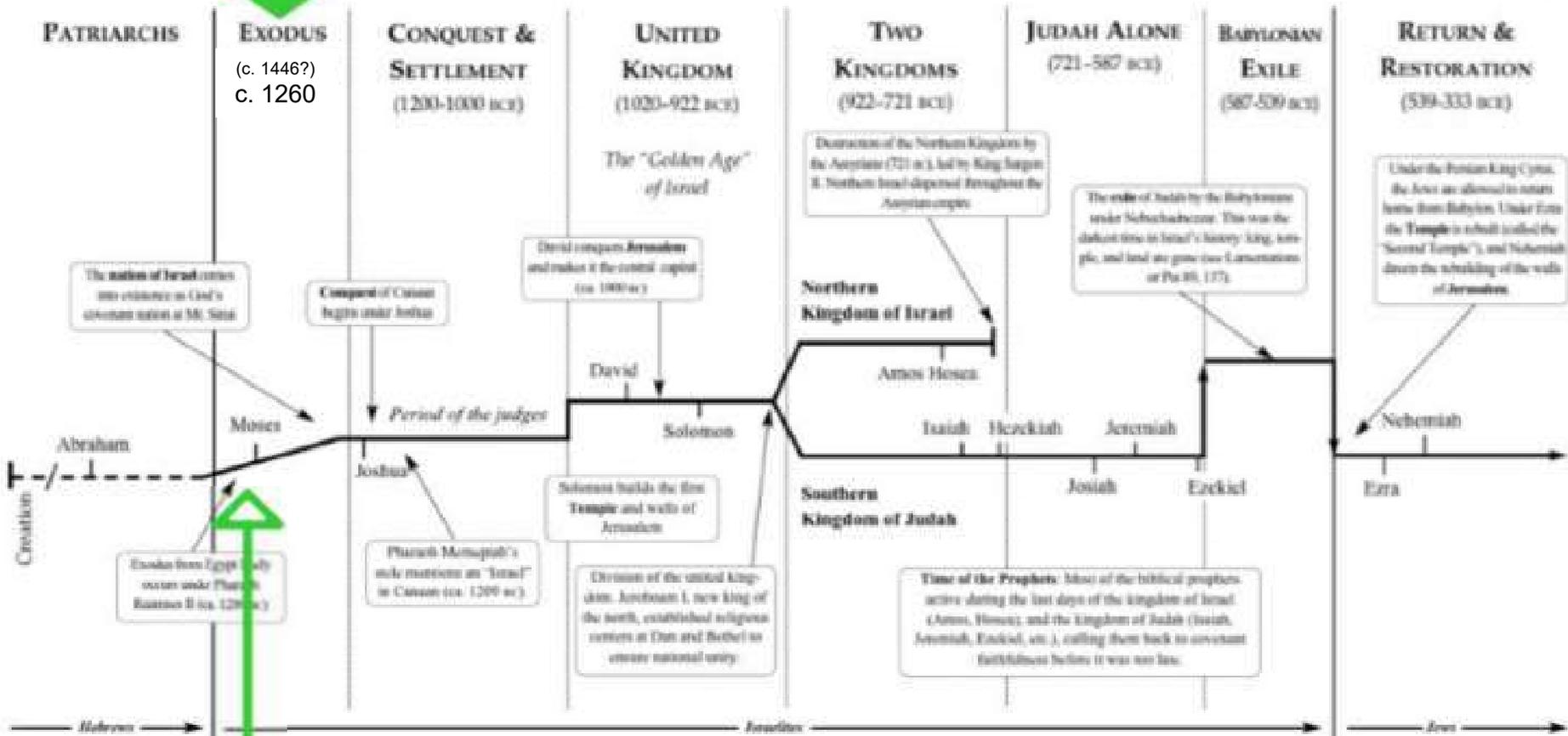


The Dead Sea Scrolls - Psalms Scroll

Biblical Geography



The Old Testament Story†



This way to Jesus
c. 6 BC

Moses
13th century
B.C



Moses

Kitchen: 'to explain what we have in our Hebrew documents we need a Hebrew leader who had had experience of life at the Egyptian court... including knowledge of treaty-type documents and their format, as well as traditional Semitic legal/social usage... In other words, somebody distressingly like... Moses, is badly needed... to make any sense of the situation as we have it.'

- *On The Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 2003),



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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

You would think that such a big event as the enslavement of an entire nation, and its mass migration generations later, would have left traces in the archaeological record and in the written histories of Egypt. Unfortunately there is no evidence of either kind. No evidence of anything like a Jewish captivity in Egypt. It probably never happened, although the legend is burned deep into Jewish culture - 50.

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You would think that such a big event as the enslavement of an entire nation, and its mass migration generations later, would have left traces in the archaeological record and

In *Outgrowing God*, there is no evidence of either kind. No evidence of anything like a Jewish captivity in Egypt. It probably never happened, although the legend is burned deep into Jewish culture

Argument from silence

Kitchen: 'A tiny fraction of reports from the East Nile Delta occur in papyri recovered from the desert near Memphis. Otherwise, the entirety of Egypt's administrative records of all periods in the Delta are lost... and monumental texts are also almost nil. And, as pharaohs *never* monumentalize *defeats* on temple walls, no record of the successful exit of a large bunch of foreign slaves (with loss of full chariot squadron) would ever have been memorialized...' - op cit, 246

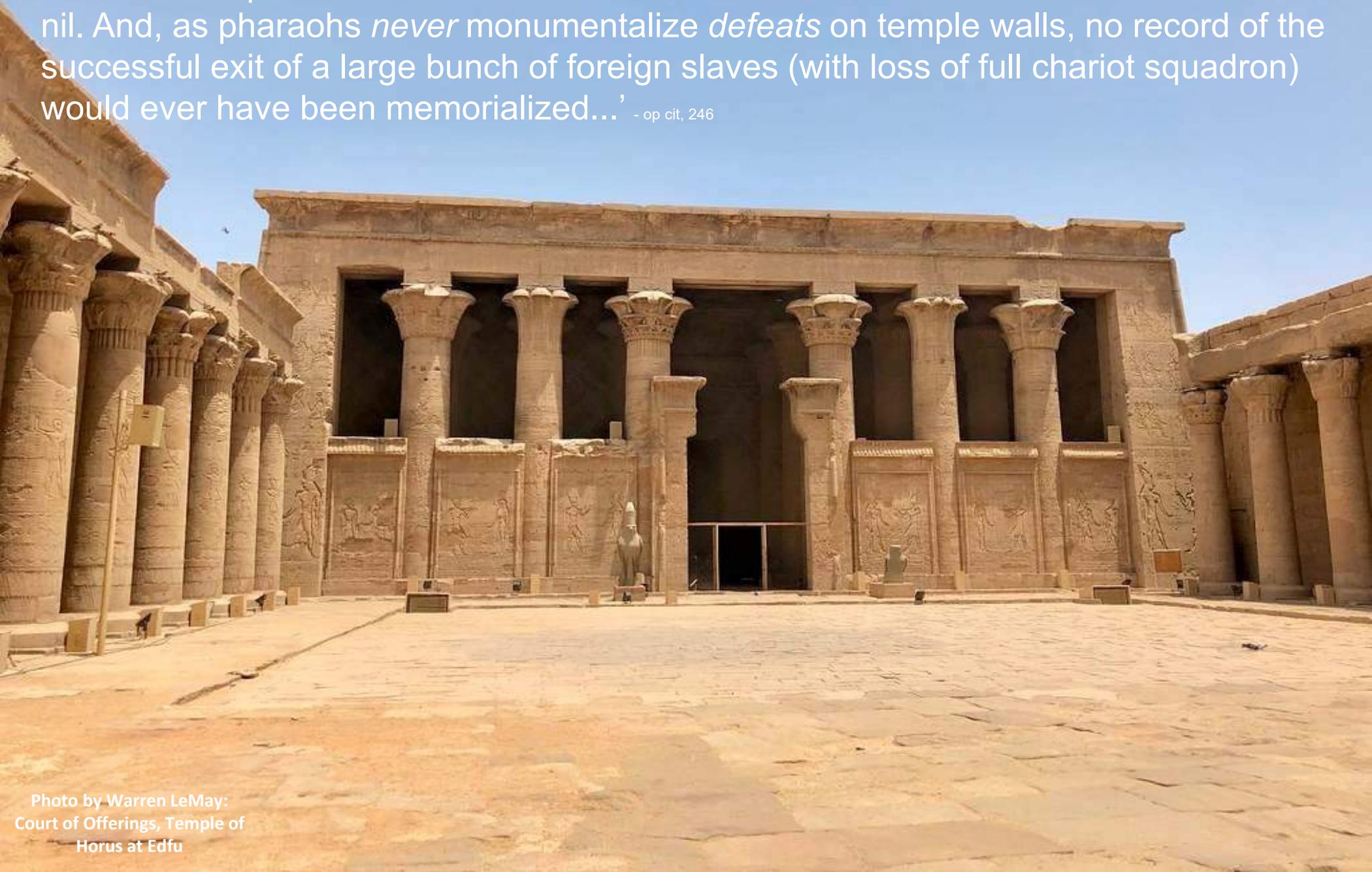
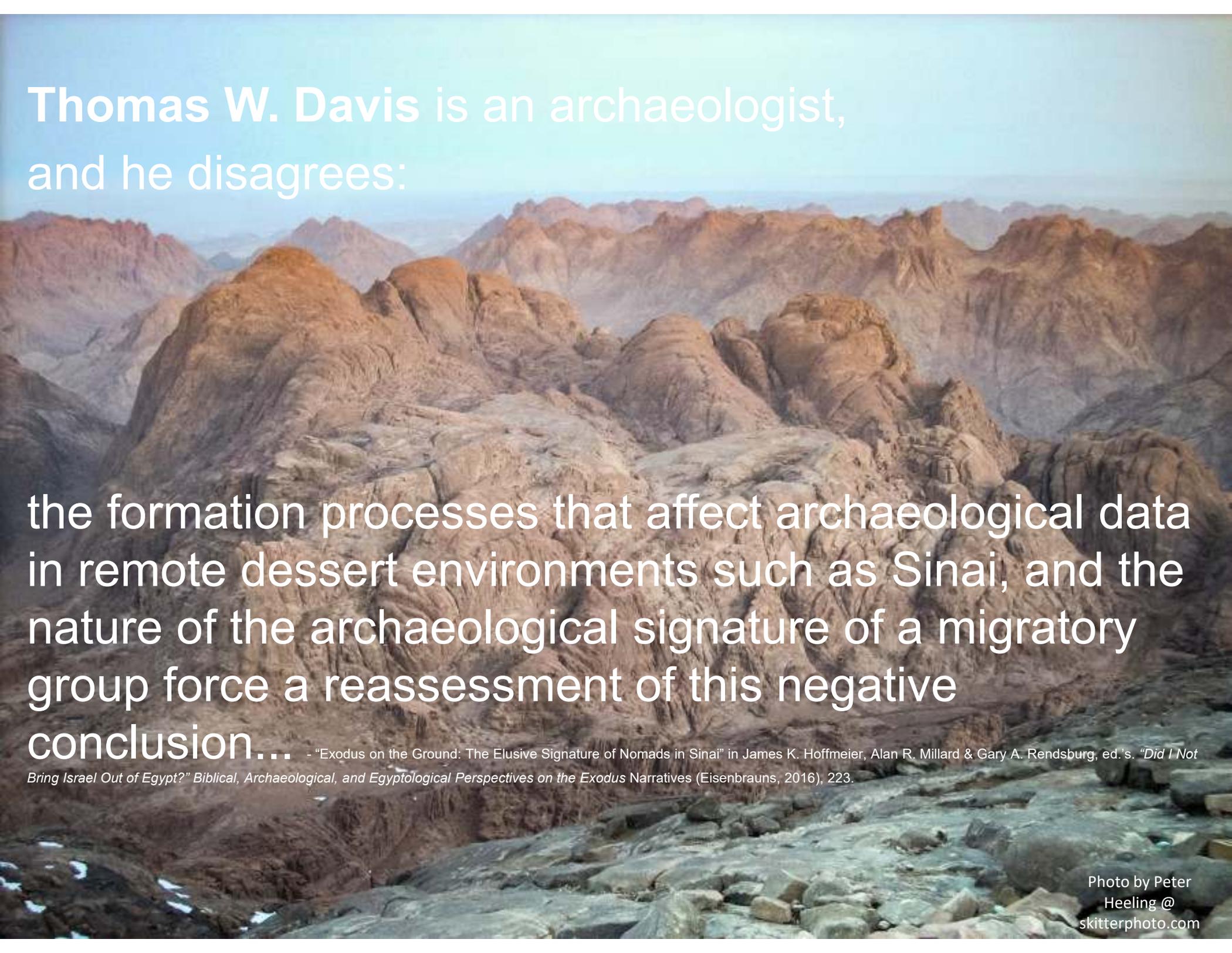


Photo by Warren LeMay:
Court of Offerings, Temple of
Horus at Edfu



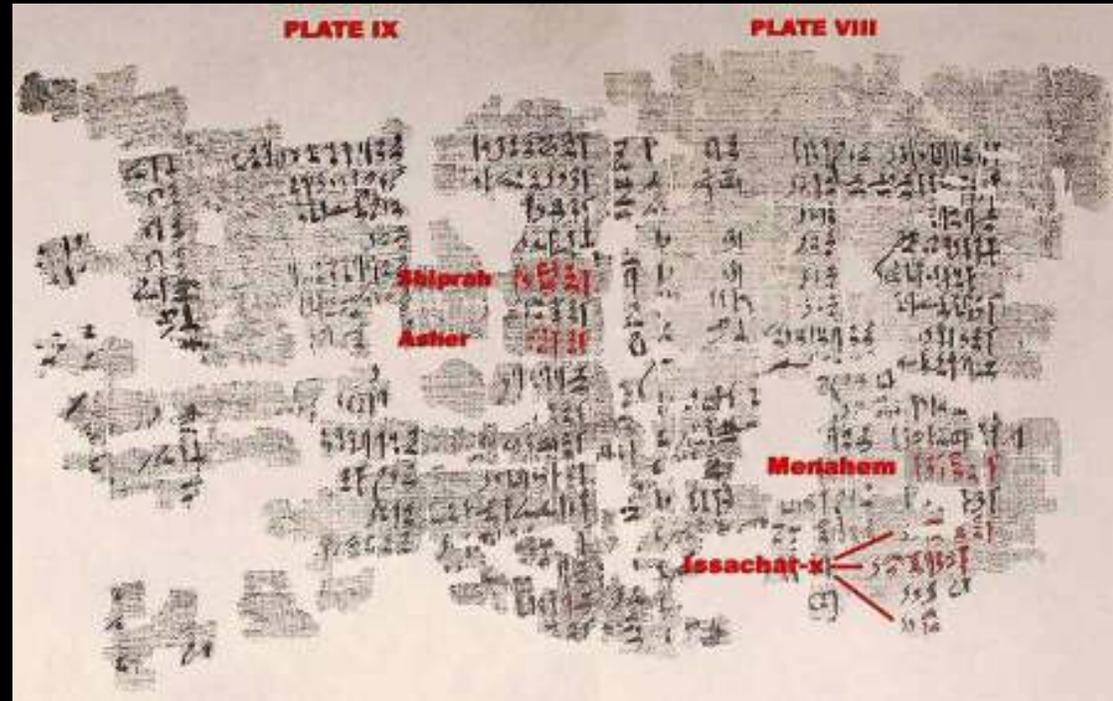
Thomas W. Davis is an archaeologist,
and he disagrees:

the formation processes that affect archaeological data
in remote dessert environments such as Sinai, and the
nature of the archaeological signature of a migratory
group force a reassessment of this negative
conclusion...

- "Exodus on the Ground: The Elusive Signature of Nomads in Sinai" in James K. Hoffmeier, Alan R. Millard & Gary A. Rendsburg, ed.'s. *"Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?" Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives* (Eisenbrauns, 2016), 223.

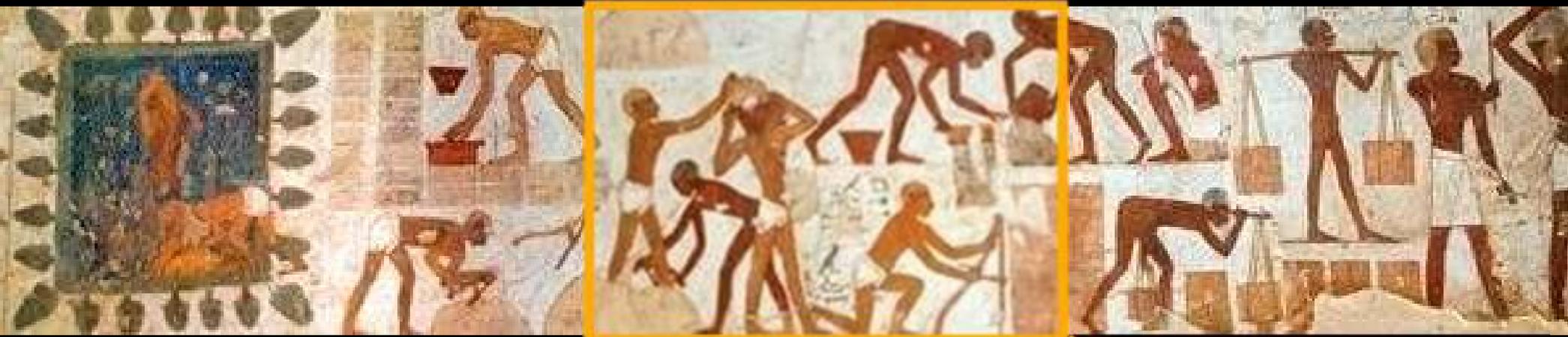
The Brooklyn Papyrus: 18th Century BC

The Bible says the Israelites became numerous and spread across Egypt. While all the documents from the Nile Delta have rotted, this slave list from the south lists dozens of slaves, including biblical names like **'Shiphrah'** (the same name as the Hebrew midwife in the Exodus account)



Brooklyn Museum:
The Brooklyn Papyrus, plates IX and VIII with the names **Shiphrah, Asher, Menahem** and **Issachar** highlighted.

The tomb of vizier Rekhimire, c. 1450 BC



www.adeffenceofthebible.com

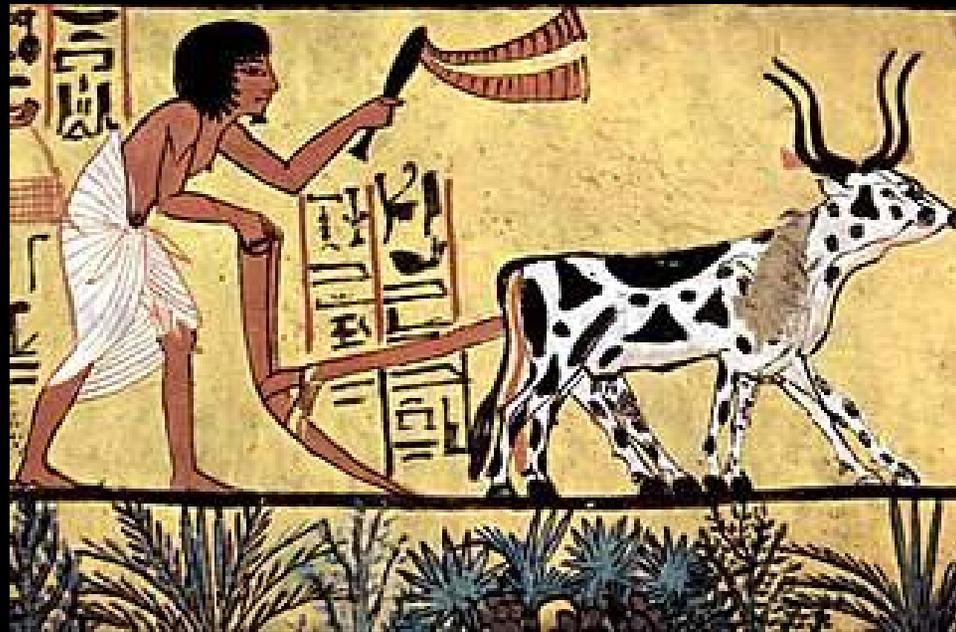
Painted on the walls of the Theban tomb of Rakhmire [c. 1450 B.C], an Egyptian vizier (or prime minister), these scenes depict Nubian and **Semitic slaves** making **mudbricks** (cf. Exodus 1:14 & 5:7)



Pinterest

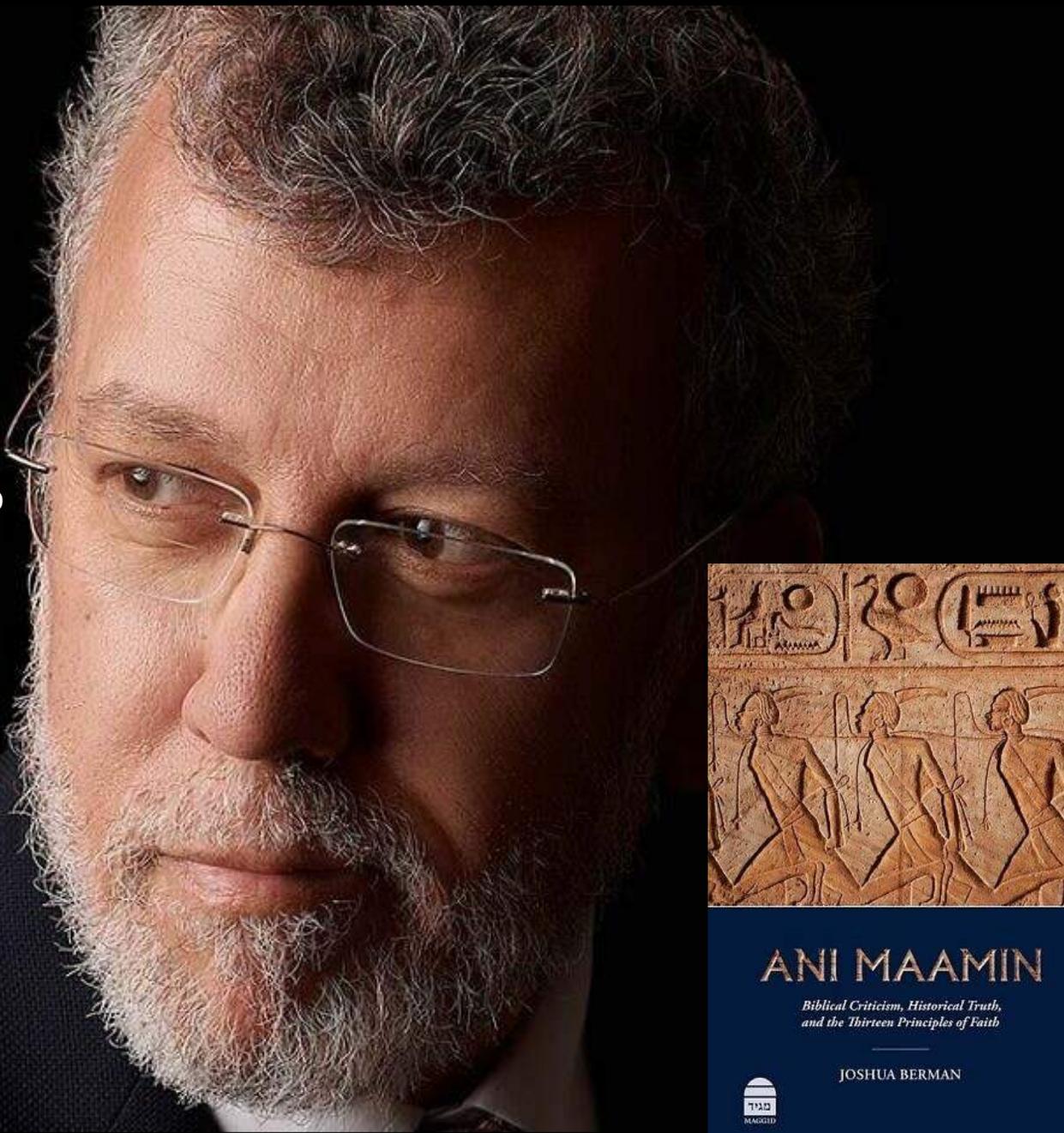
Cultural verisimilitude

- **Scott Hahn & Curtis Mitch** note that Exodus displays an accurate knowledge ‘of... the Egyptian agricultural calendar (9:31-32) and the use of acacia wood [which] is indigenous to parts of Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula but is not found in Palestine.’
- They argue: ‘it is difficult to believe that authors in postexilic Palestine... could have known and accurately portrayed the conditions of second-millennium Egypt (c. 1400-1200 B.C.).’ - *Exodus*, 15.



'Prof. **Joshua Berman**... notes that there are multiple allusions throughout the Exodus narrative that “**strikingly appear to reflect the realities of late second-millennium [BCE] Egypt**” which “**a scribe living centuries later and inventing the story of afresh would have been unlikely to know.**” ... From the form of the tabernacle in the wilderness, which he argues is based on the portable throne tent of Ramses II, to the use of terminology like God taking the Israelites out of Egypt “with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,” which has precedents in ancient Egyptian literature, Berman believes that the Torah is full of cultural allusions which would have been deeply meaningful for contemporary Jews’ forebears but which can now only be understood through the lens of academic research.’

- Sam Sokol, www.timesofisrael.com/orthodoxy-can-withstand-an-unflinching-academic-look-at-the-bible-says-scholar/



Linguistic Evidence

- **James Hoffmeier, Richard Hess and Benjamin Noonan** have documented cultural and linguistic links between late Bronze Age Egypt and the first five books of the Old Testament that point to their authenticity
- **Noonan:** ‘Given the observation that at least some of the Egyptian loanwords in the exodus and wilderness narratives were borrowed during the Late Bronze Age, it is likely that the events of these narratives took place during the Late Bronze Age, just as one would expect if they represent authentic history.’
- **Edwin Yamauchi:** ‘The similarity of the Mosaic covenant to the Hittite suzerainty treaties, which date from the second millennium BC, has convinced many scholars of the antiquity of the Mosaic covenant.’ - “Egyptian

Loanwords as Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus and Wilderness Traditions” in James K. Hoffmeier et al, ed.’s. *“Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?” Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives* (Eisenbrauns, 2016), 66-67.

Stephen O. Moshier & James K. Hoffmeier used information from geology, archaeology, digital topography and satellite imagery to produce a map of the eastern Nile Delta and Sinai Peninsula during the Bronze Age. They found: **‘The restored geography... provides a plausible map of the region that is described in the Exodus texts.’**

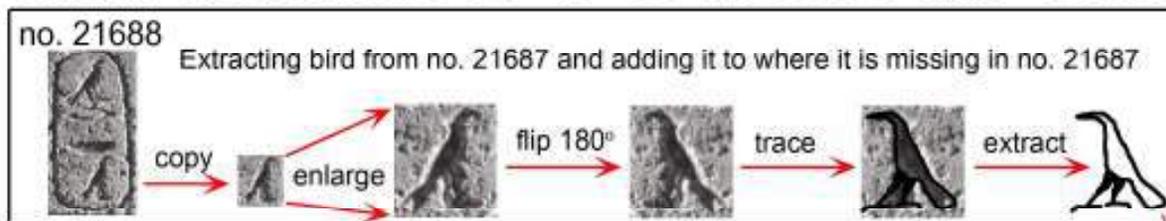
- Stephen O. Moshier & James K. Hoffmeier, "Which Way Out of Egypt? Physical Geography Related to the Exodus Itinerary"
www.academia.edu/12144255/Which_Way_Out_of_Egypt_Physical_Geography_Related_to_the_Exodus_Itinerary



Physical geography of the eastern Nile Delta and northwest Sinai during the Late Bronze Age

“Israel” Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief

No. 21687

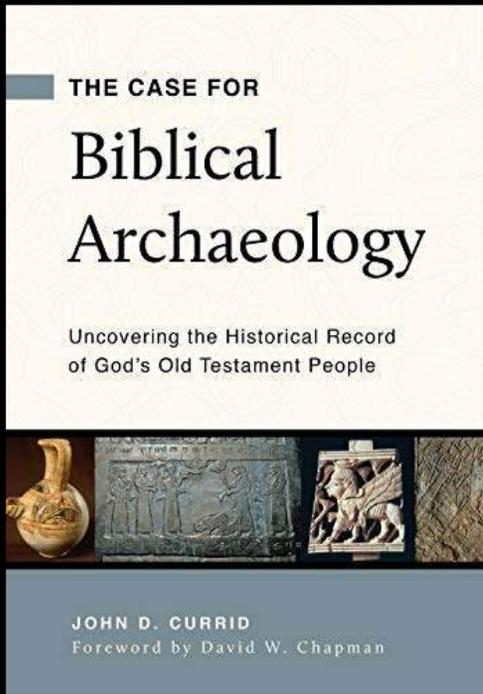


- c. 1400 – 1213 B.C
- There's debate around the pronunciation of the reconstructed word (one school of thought argues that the presence of the 'SH' sound invalidates it as a possibility of it reading Israel. Another argues that there's no known location the name could refer to other than Israel)
- If 'Israel' is the correct reading, the spelling of Ashkelon and the proximity of the names Ashkelon, Canaan and Israel are all reminiscent of the 13th century Merneptah Stele
- The rendering of the name Canaan is similar to its spelling in the early 14th century B.C – but could simply be archaic, or copied from an earlier inscription

The Merneptah Stele

- Dated c. 1220 B.C., the Merneptah Stele is an extra-biblical record of a people group called Israel
- Set up by Pharaoh Merneptah to commemorate military victories in **Cannan**, it proclaims: '**Ashkelon is carried off, and Gezer is captured. Yeno'am is made into nonexistence; Israel is wasted, his seed is not.**'
- Yeno'am are followed by an Egyptian hieroglyph that designates a town
- Israel is followed by a hieroglyph that means a people





John D. Currid: ‘during the twelfth through eleventh centuries B.C., many small settlements emerged, and many of these were occupied for the first time. It is tempting to attribute this influx of settlement to the Israelites...’ – *The Case For Biblical Archaeology*, 73.



David Porush: ‘the four-room house. A distinctive home floor plan, it appears suddenly throughout Israel at precisely the same time as the Hebrews enter the Promised Land...’

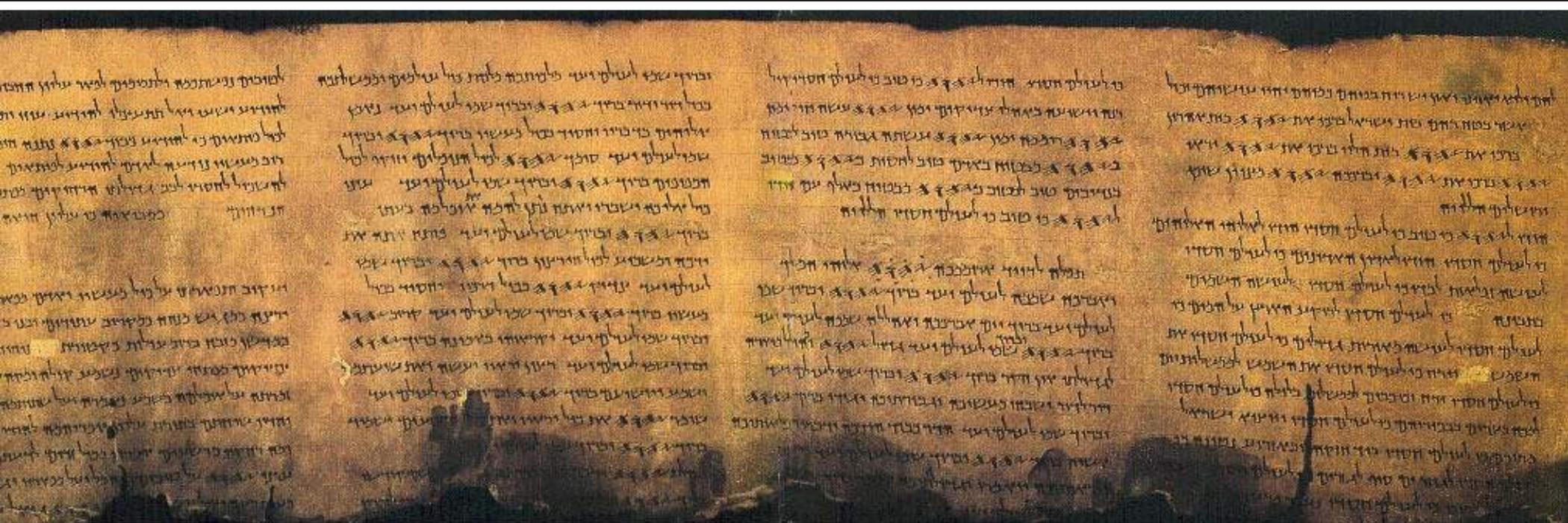
- <https://davidporush.com/2019/03/05/the-four-room-house-another-bit-of-evidence-for-the-torahs-accuracy-as-history/>

- 2017 excavations at *Khirbet el-Mastarah* (a 2.5-acre site in the Jordan Valley, north of Jericho) revealed stone enclosures, rectilinear rooms, and pottery dating to the Late Bronze Age II / Iron Age I
- The site appears to have been used by a nomadic or semi-nomadic group at the beginning of the Iron Age (c. 1200 BC)
- **Ariel University archaeologist David Ben-Shlomo:** ‘We have not proved that these camps are from the period of the early Israelites, but it is possible. If they are, this might fit the biblical story of the Israelites coming from east of the Jordan River, then crossing the Jordan and entering into the hill country of Israel later.’



© Credit: Pen News

#4: From Gideon to Solomon

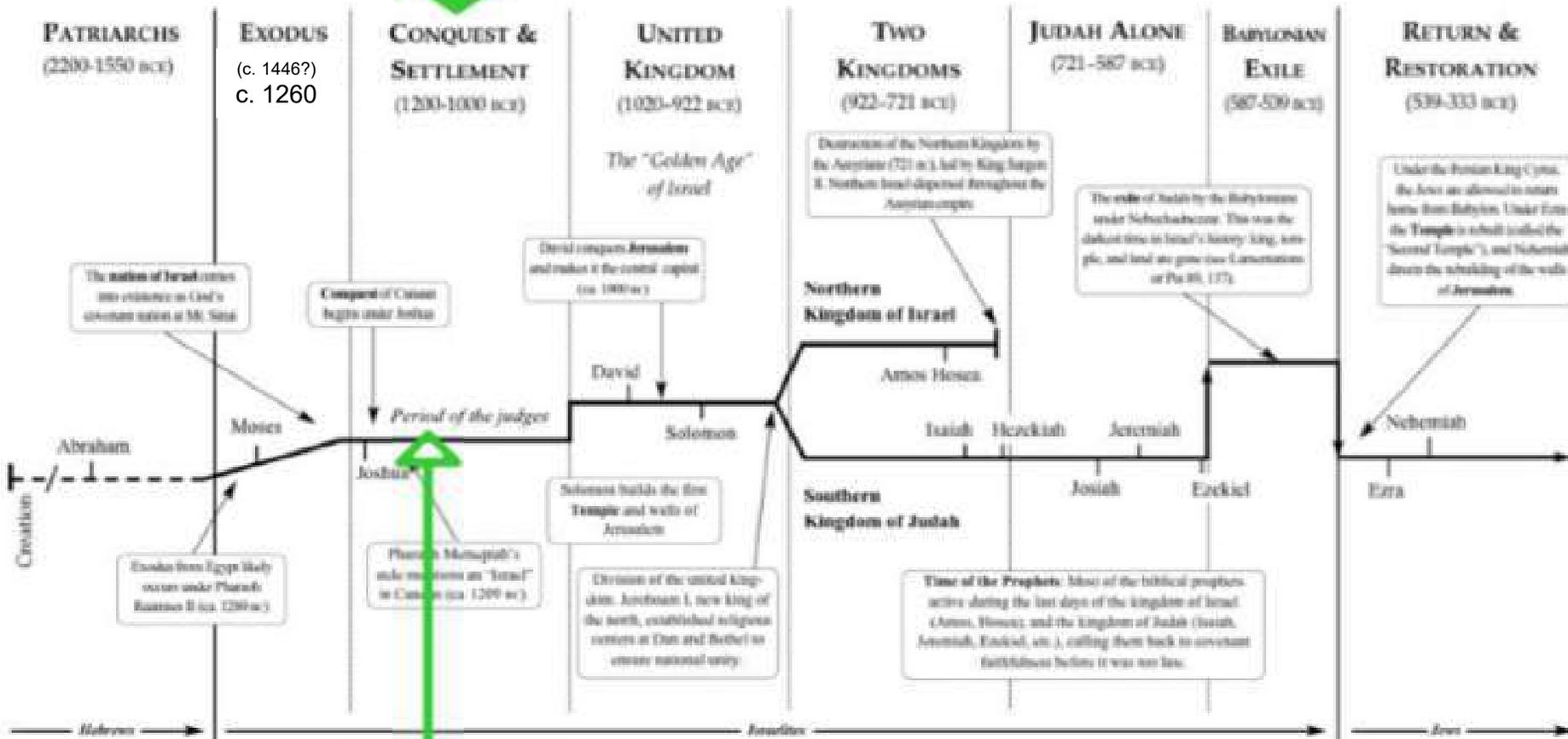


The Dead Sea Scrolls - Psalms Scroll

Biblical Geography



The Old Testament Story



Gideon
c. 1150 BC

This way to Jesus
c. 6 BC



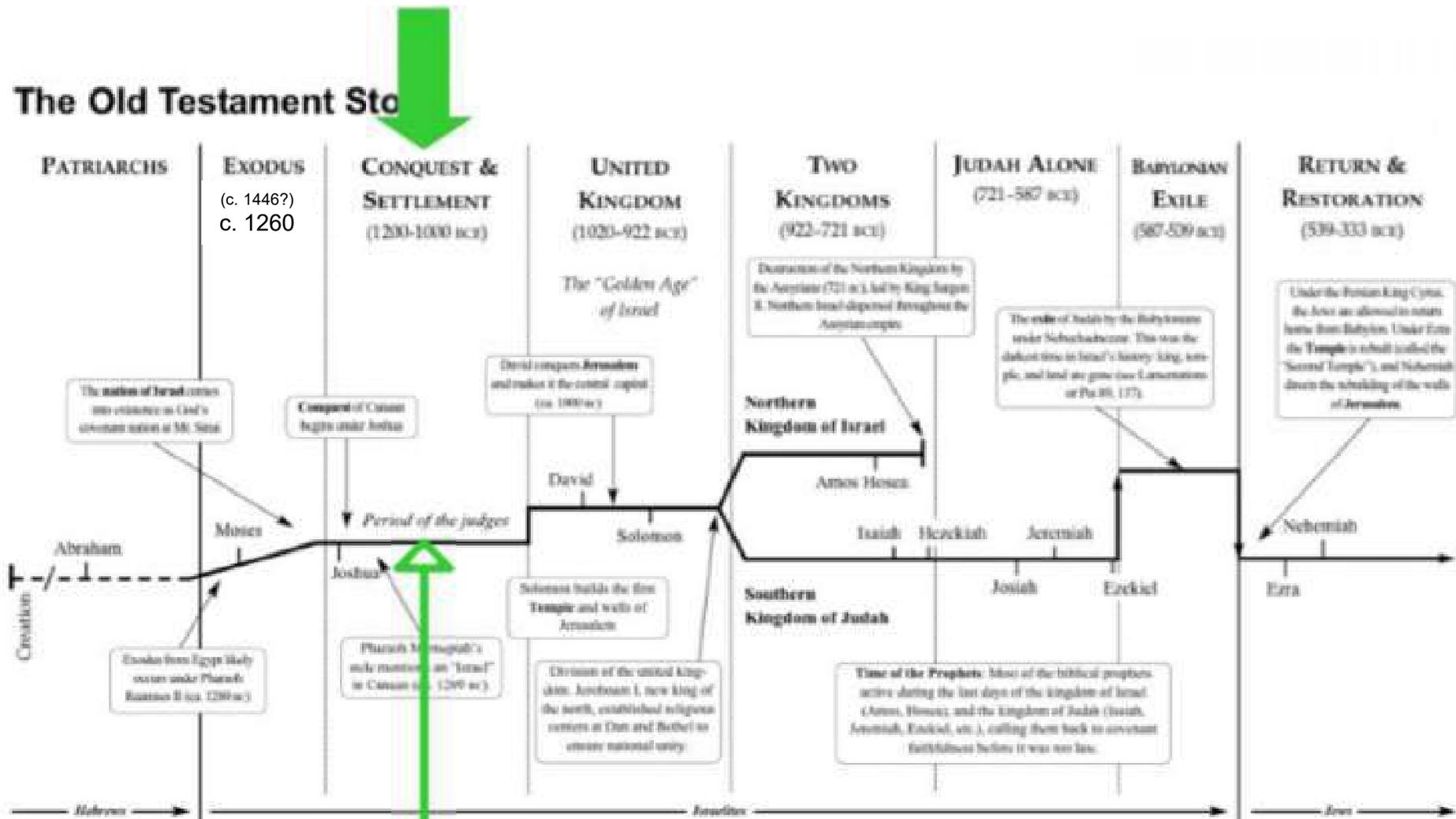
Gideon's nickname [Discovered 2021]



Photo: Dafna Gazit / Israel Antiquities Authority

Bryan Windle: 'An ostrakon (a pottery sherd with writing) bearing the name **Jerubbaal**, has been unearthed... near the ancient city of Lachish. Jerubbaal ("Let Baal contend against him") was the nickname that Gideon was given after he destroyed the altar of Baal (Judges 6:32). The ostrakon dates to [c. 1100 B.C] (i.e. the time of the Judges) based on typology and radiocarbon dating from organic samples taken from the same archaeological layer in which it was found. The name Jerubbaal is only ever used for Gideon in the Bible, and this is the first discovery of it in an archaeological context. Due to the uniqueness and rarity of the name, some scholars believe this to be a reference to Gideon. Others have urged caution... Regardless, **this discovery is significant in that it affirms the name Jerubbaal was used during the time the Bible describes.**'

The Old Testament Story



Sampson
c. 1100 BC

This way to Jesus
c. 6 BC

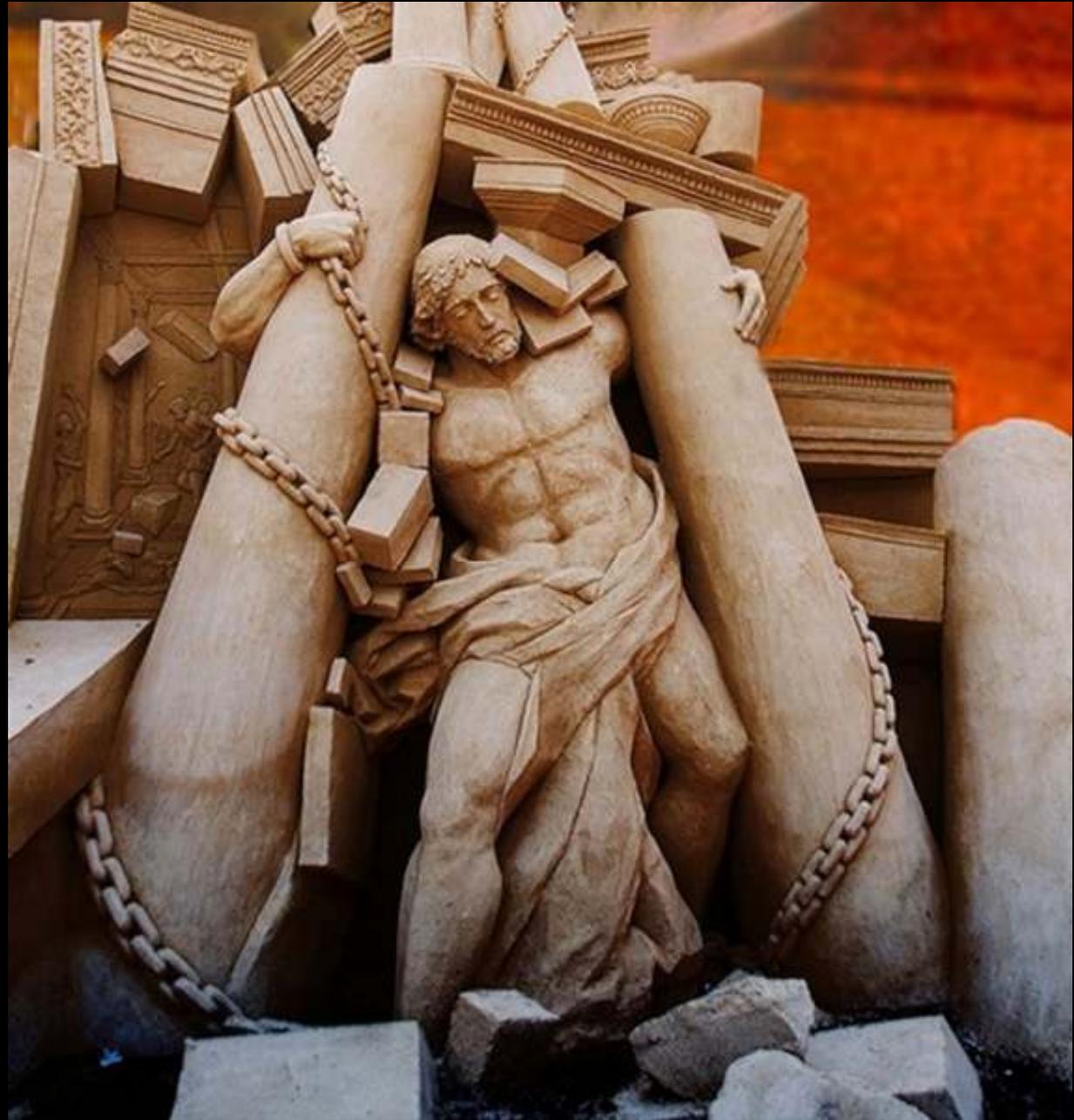


- 11th century BC stone seal, thought to depict a man fighting a lion, discovered at Beth Shemesh ('House of the Sun') in 2012
- **Professor Shlomo Bunimovitz:** 'If we are right and what we see on the seal is a representation of a man meeting a lion, it shows that the Samson legend already existed around the area of Beth Shemesh during that time period. We can date it quite precisely.' - www.sci-news.com/archaeology/article00524.html
- The location, date and image (which resembles contemporary depictions of lions) match the Samson and the lion encounter depicted in Judges 14
- Beth Shemesh is c. 19 miles west of Jerusalem, near the Iron Age border between Israelites and Philistines
- Samson was born, lived part of his life, and was buried across the valley from Beth Shemesh (Judges 13:2, 25; 16:31)
- Samson's killing a young lion (Judges 14:5-6) happened on the way from his family home to Timnah - a site identified as Tel Batash - a few miles from Beth Shemesh

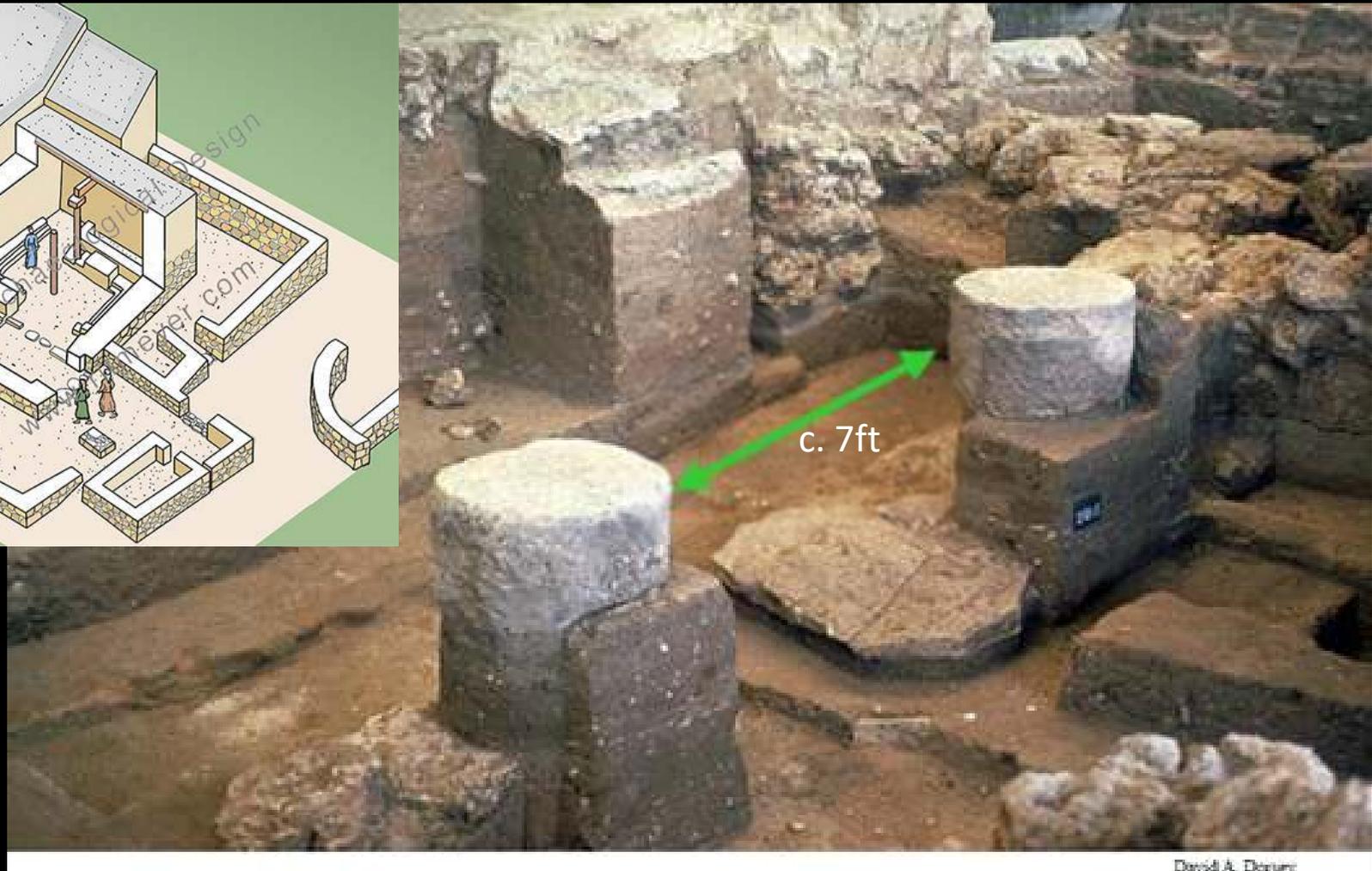
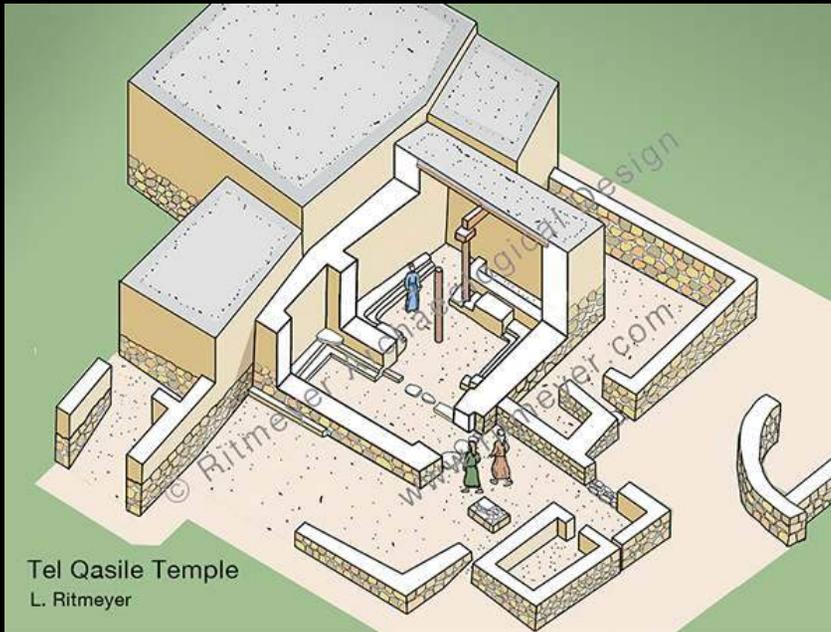


Judges 16 - Samson's death in the temple of the Philistine god Dagon in Gaza

They made him stand between the pillars. And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them." Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there... Samson called to the Lord and said, "O Lord God, please remember me... that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes." And **Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them**, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it (ESV)



The Gaza temple of Dagon hasn't been excavated, but was probably *similar* to the Philistine temple at Tell Qasile (destroyed early 10th century BC)



RICHARD
DAWKINS

*Outgrowing
God*

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

King David... made no impact either on archaeology or on written history outside the Bible. This suggests that, if he existed at all, he was probably a minor local chieftain rather than the great king of legend and song - 48.

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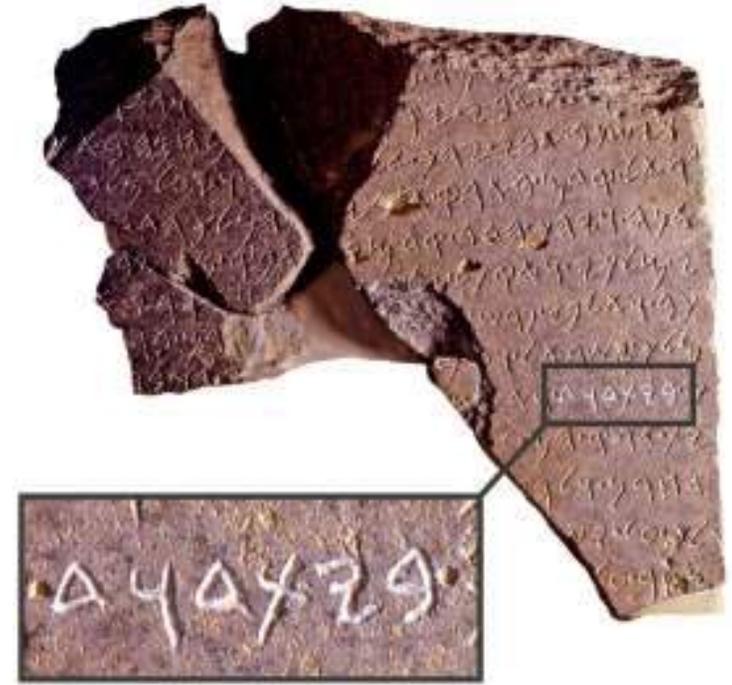
Ignorance

probably a minor local chieftain rather than the great king of legend and song - 48.

- Dawkins obviously doesn't know that publication of fragments of an Old Aramaic stela from Tel Dan in 1993/1995 bears the first recognized nonbiblical mention of the tenth-century king David, in a text that reflected events of the year 841, and would have been set up at no great interval after that date. This Stela famously mentions 'the house of David'
- **Eric Cline**, Professor of classics, anthropology and history at George Washington University: 'the finding of this inscription brought an end to the debate and settled the question of whether David was an actual historical person...'

Introduction (Oxford, 2009)

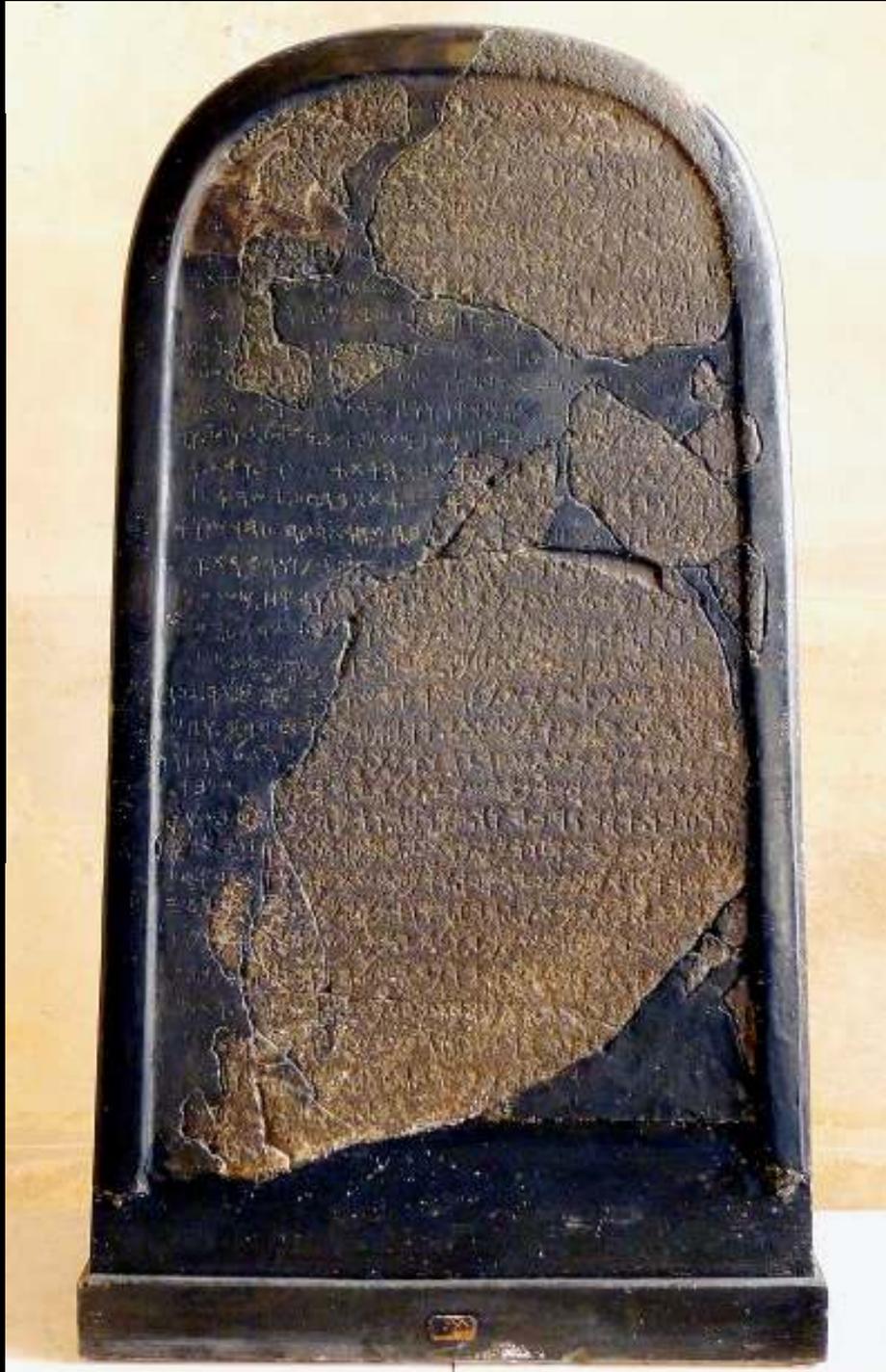
- Eric Cline, *Biblical Archaeology: A Very Short*



Courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority

9th Century B.C. Mesha Inscription / Moabite Stone

- Line 31 says: **‘And the House of David inhabited Horonaim’**
- The town of Horonaim is mentioned in Jeremiah 48:3-7



Dr Michael Langlois:
‘my conclusion for line 31 is that the most likely reading is Beit David [house of David].... The new imaging technology that we have confirms the reading of Beit David... It’s a good thing when science can confirm a hypothesis.’

– *Times of Israel*, 3rd May 2019

- In 2005, excavations in the Philistine city of Gath (modern day Tell es-Safi), reveals a Semitic inscription dating to the 10th-9th centuries BC, bearing two Indo-European names that *resembled* 'Goliath'

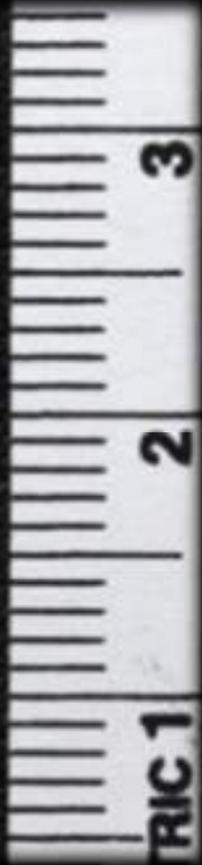


Photo: The Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project

- **Aren Maeir**, head of excavations at Tell es-Safi, says this inscription: **'shows us that David and Goliath's story reflects the cultural reality of the time.'** - <https://faithfulphilosophy.wordpress.com/2017/07/09/the-life-of-david/>

Davidic State Bullae [2014]

- **Jimmy Hardin**, associate professor in the MSU Department of Anthropology and Middle Eastern Cultures: ‘Our preliminary results indicated that this site is integrated into a political entity that is typified by elite activities, suggesting that a state was already being formed in the 10th century BC... **these bullae... date to the 10th century BC, and [this] lends general support to the historical veracity of David and Solomon as recorded in the Hebrew biblical texts.**’ – *Science News*, 2014



- 2018 discoveries at Tel 'Eton - believed to be the biblical site of Eglon – on the southeastern edge of ancient Israel's territory, has construction dating to the period of King David and fits the biblical description of an expanding kingdom



Tel 'Eton: Griffin Higher Photography

Yosef Garfinkel, Saar Ganor & Michael G. Hasel conclude their 2018 book *In The Footsteps Of King David: Revelations from A Biblical City*:

Historical processes and cultural phenomena referred to in the Bible relating to the 10th century BCE thus find concrete expression at Khirbet Qeiyafa at the same time period. Such clear examples of correspondence between archaeological finds and the biblical tradition stand in contrast to the theories of scholars advocating the minimalist approach, and their assertion that the Bible was written during the Hellenistic or Persian period, or at the end of the 7th century BCE, and contains no historical memory, but who have no data or finds to support such views... The Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations have provided archaeological evidence corroborating historical memories from the time of King David... The excavations showed that at the end of the 11th century BCE an urban society and central monarchy began to take shape in the Kingdom of Judah... **The proposal that the Bible was written many hundreds of years after the events is describes, and that it reflects only the period in which it was written, is no longer sustainable** - *In The Footsteps Of King David: Revelations from A*

Biblical City (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018), 201-202.

- Archeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar from the Hebrew University

- King David's Palace?

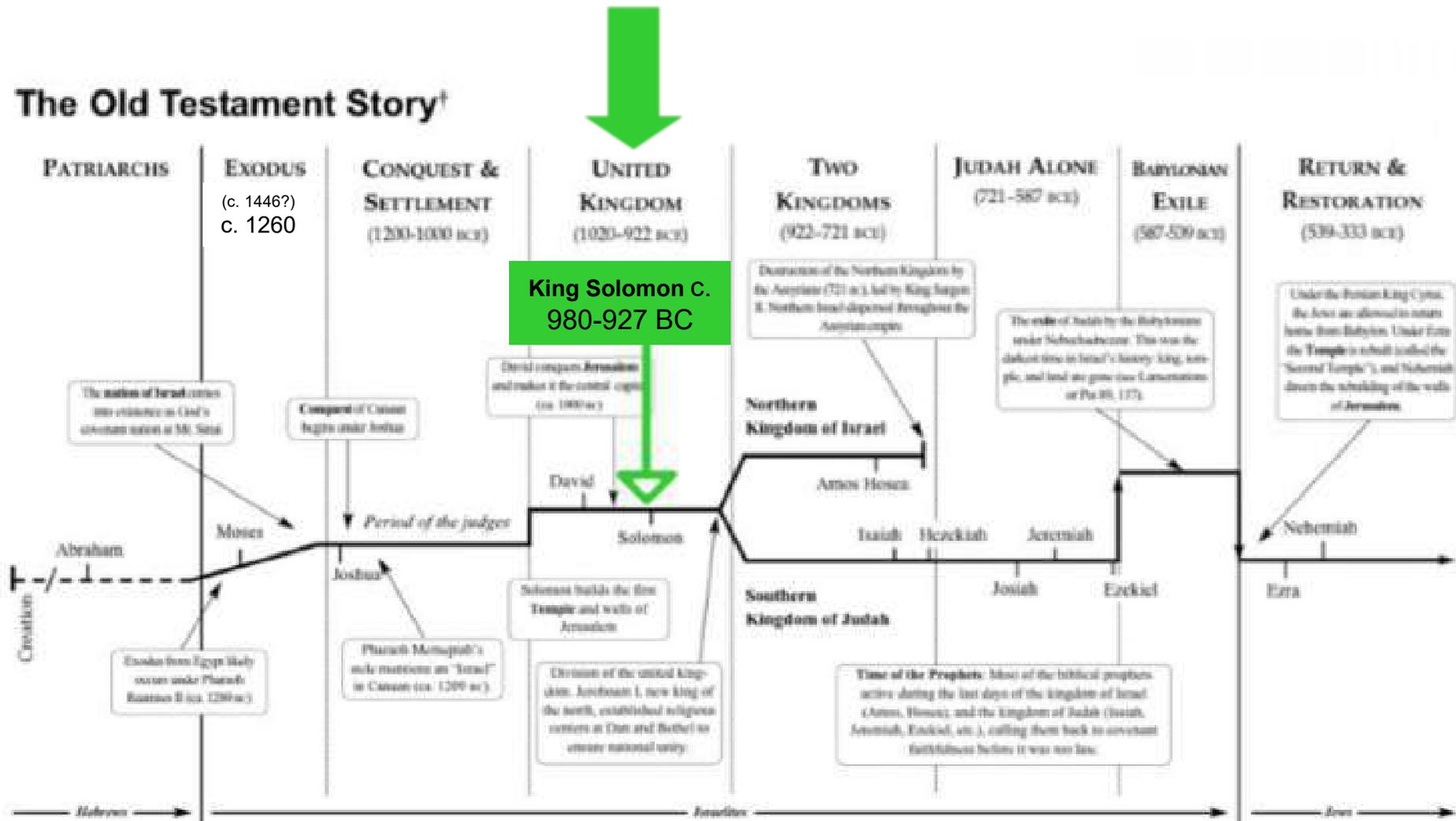


Wikimedia commons photo by Deror_avi

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:City_of_David_-_King_David%27s_Palace_IMG_5815.JPG)

<https://claudemariottini.com/2010/05/05/eilat-mazar-and-king-david%E2%80%99s-palace/>

The Old Testament Story†



King Solomon's (Edomite) Copper Mines [2013]

‘this was considered to be a late Bronze Age site related to the New Kingdom of Egypt in the 13th and early 12th centuries BC,’ [University of Tel Aviv archaeologist] Ben-Yosef says... But high-precision radiocarbon dating of [donkey] dung, as well as textiles and other organic material, showed that the mining camp’s heyday was the 10th century BC - the era of the biblical kings David and Solomon

– ‘Found: Fresh Clues to Mystery of King Solomon's Mines’ National Geographic (2017)

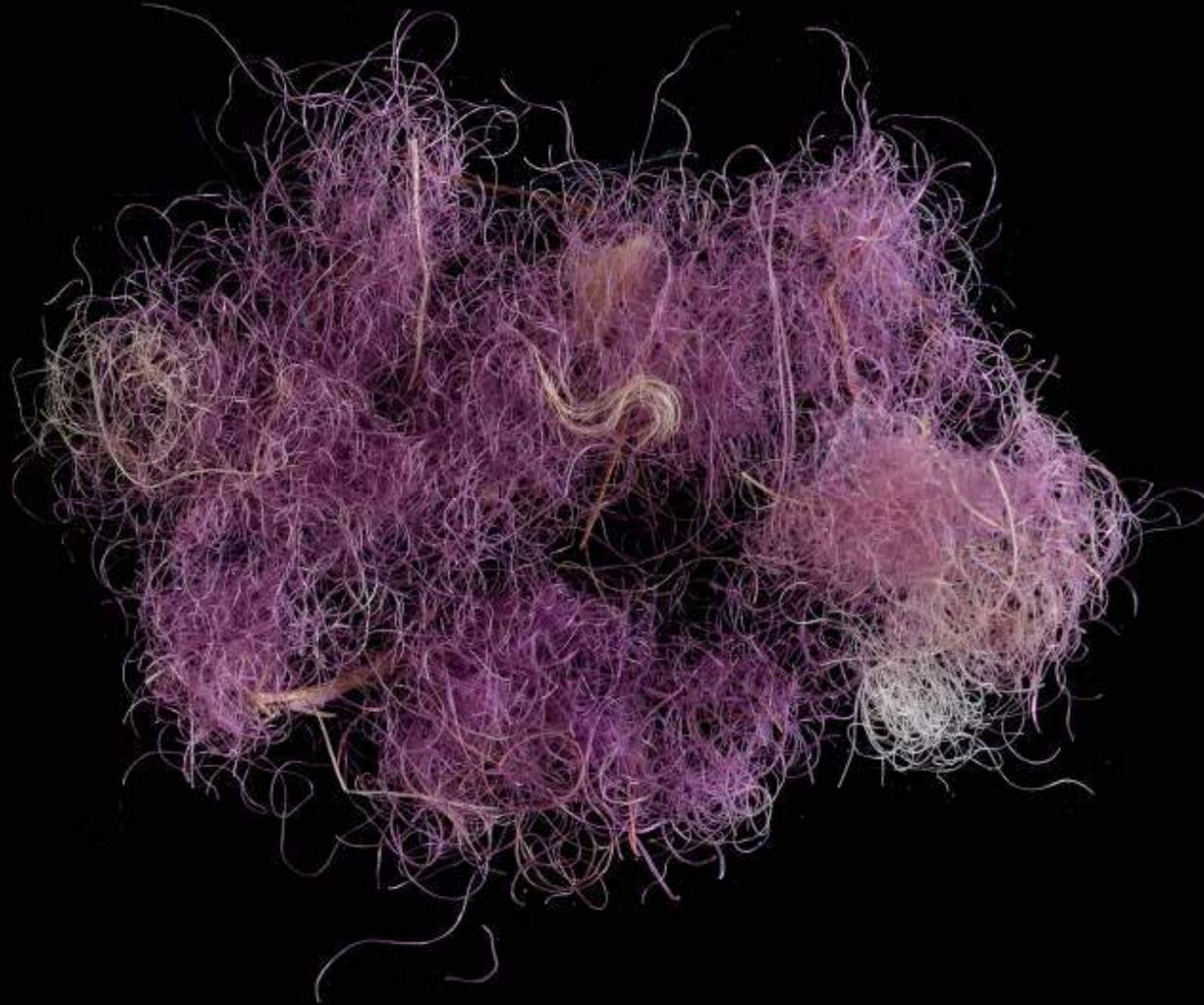


Archaeologist **Ben-Yosef** says that if the Bible's claim that David brought the Edomites to heel is accurate: 'There's a serious possibility that Jerusalem got its wealth from taxing these mining operations.'

Solomon embarked on a building campaign that included the first temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 7). Many of the implements used in worship were made of bronze, requiring much copper to form the alloy (cf. 1 Kings 7:46)



Royal Purple [2021]



Purple textile fibers from 1,000 BC excavated in the Timna Valley
Photo: Dafna Gazit/Israel Antiquities Authority

Bryan Windle:

‘Scholars have identified “argaman” royal purple dye on three pieces of ancient fabric discovered at... an ancient copper smelting camp in the Timna Valley... The dry conditions at Timna preserved the cloth, which was dated using Carbon-14 to 1000 BC... This purple dye, known in the Hebrew Bible as “argaman” is mentioned in numerous passages, and is associated with the Tabernacle (Ex 26:1; 27:16) and royalty...’ -

<https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2021/12/28/top-ten-discoveries-in-biblical-archaeology-in-2021/>

Conclusion

- Extra-biblical evidence cannot prove every historical detail of the Old Testament narratives - and we don't need it to
- Extra-biblical evidence can provide us with sufficient evidence to conclude that 'biblical minimalism' is an unlikely hypothesis
- How far our 'biblical maximalism' goes will depend upon factors besides the extra-biblical evidence alone