

# Comparing Revised Chronologies and Determining Which Works Best

Roger Waite

## Introduction

My first introduction to the world of chronological revisionism came back in 1990 when I was 21 years old and I first read Immanuel Velikovsky's *Ages in Chaos*. It was a gripping book that dared to synchronise Egyptian and biblical history in a completely different way than the standard chronology does.

A major piece of evidence Velikovsky used was the Ipuwer papyrus which he believed was an Egyptian record of the plagues of Egypt. He explained that Gardiner believed it was written around the time of the 13th Dynasty or a little later, which was conventionally believed to have been 300 years earlier than the Biblical date for the Exodus (c.1450 BC). That shifting of the Middle Bronze Age forward in time to the Exodus was the start for his *Ages in Chaos* series that took the story all of Egypt all the way up to Alexander the Great.

With the advent of the internet in the mid 1990's I eagerly searched for other material relating to what he'd written. In the process I found out about the SIS and its published journals and found that other revisionists had taken this research in other directions.

The first of those I learned about was David Rohl who has written several books such as *A Test of Time* (aka *Pharaohs and Kings*) espousing his New Chronology which called for a less radical revision than that proposed by Velikovsky. David Rohl retained the Manetho order of dynasties and began Dynasty 18 about 1200 BC with a key synchronism of Rameses II (Dynasty 19) as the biblical Shishak. This was a reduction of about 350 years. Another slightly different and more conservative chronology was offered by Peter James in his book *Centuries of Darkness*. He started Dynasty 18 in 1300 BC compressing the New Kingdom less than David Rohl.

About the same time I also found a magazine called *Archaeological Diggings*. Its editor, David Down, is a Seventh-Day Adventist from Sydney. When I saw that a chronology similar to Velikovsky's was being discussed in it and in David Down's videos I contacted him to find out more about it and he put me onto the work of another Seventh-Day Adventist scholar, Donovan Courville.

Courville kept Velikovsky's extended 400-year period for the Hyksos in line with the time of the Judges and Velikovsky's placement of Dynasty 18 from the time contemporary with Saul. Courville had Dynasties 19 and 20 follow straight after and run parallel with much of the Libyan dynasties. Velikovsky shocked his followers by having Dynasties 18 and 19 separated with the Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties ruling in between. The Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties were reduced in overall time to about 160 years. Dynasty 19 was placed at the same time as Dynasty 26 of the Late Period. The most famous pharaoh of Dynasty 19, Rameses II, Velikovsky identified as the biblical Necho who ruled near the end of the kingdom of Judah.

About a decade ago I struck up a friendship with the late Australian scholar Dale Murphie after contacting him about an article on catastrophism that appeared in an SIS journal. Through Dale I also met Eric Aitchison. I found out that Dale and Eric both had their own differing revised chronologies.

Dale did something novel as a means of retaining two of Velikovsky's key synchronisms (Thutmose III as Shishak and Rameses II as the biblical Necho) without separating Dynasties 18 and 19. He added six extra kings (based on his interpretation of Manetho's listings of kings) into Dynasty 18 as secondary rulers for a time. He saw Libyan domination come as a result of the defeat of Zerah (identified by Dale and Velikovsky as Amenhotep II) in the time of King Asa of Judah. Dynasty 18 regained dominance later in Thutmose IV's reign, according to Dale, following the secondary rule of his 6 extra kings.

Eric did not take this approach. He accepted Velikovsky's late placement of Rameses II but not his Thutmose III synchronism with Shishak. Consequently, he applied the full 511 years of Josephus for the Hyksos starting Dynasty 18 a century later than where Velikovsky started it. There are still other revised chronologies out there, some of which have been discussed in this journal.

With so many chronologies on offer how does one make sense of it all? How does one decide which chronology or mix of chronologies best fits the evidence of archaeology and the written ancient records including the Bible? For many years now I had hoped that someone would produce a work that would examine the strengths and weaknesses of the many

chronologies on offer. As a result of not being able to find such a work I decided to take on the mammoth task of doing an extensive comparative analysis.

The original version of my comparative analysis was a 1500-page work (The Chronology of Egypt and the Near East) that has been regularly refined and improved as further information has become available. A more digestible 500-page volume (The Bible and Egypt) was the next step in its evolution. Currently I am in the process of developing a 12 lecture video series for the general public called *The Bible and Egypt – How Chronology and Archaeology Impact the Bible*. In this article I wish to discuss my approach to the analysis and summarise my conclusions.

## **The Logjam of Dynasties Problem created by a Middle Bronze Exodus**

Most revisionists are in agreement that the Exodus was in the Middle Bronze Age, when civilisation collapsed at the end of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, as opposed to the conventional chronology which places it in the Late Bronze Age (either 1450 BC (Late Bronze 1) or 1250 BC (Late Bronze 2)). David Rohl's work, based on the archaeology of Avaris, was a major contribution to biblical studies, and provided an archaeological framework for much of Velikovsky's *Ages in Chaos*.

The archaeology of the Late Bronze Age is a terrible mismatch with the Exodus and the Conquest. No collapse of civilisation occurred in the Late Bronze Age in Egypt and most of the cities in Palestine noted in the conquest account were not occupied in the Bronze Age. On the other hand, the archaeology is a perfect fit in both Egypt and in Palestine for the Middle Bronze Age as well documented in the excellent 2014 documentary *Patterns of Evidence: Exodus* produced by Tim Mahoney of Thinking Man Films. Revisionists David Rohl and John Bimson both appeared in the film.

Indirectly, support for Velikovsky and Rohl comes from conventional historian Ahimai Mazar. Analysing the archaeological background to the description of the Conquest in the Old Testament, she makes it clear that the conventional dating of the Conquest in the Late Bronze Age is difficult to maintain. In particular, the battle against the Canaanite King of Arad (Numbers 21:1) is contradicted by the archaeology:

systematic excavations in all the mounds of the Beersheba valley ... found no Late Bronze Age settlement. That unequivocal archaeological fact should be taken into account when evaluating the historical reliability of the biblical tradition concerning this region. Does the tradition reflect an earlier period, perhaps the Middle Bronze Age II, when the area was settled by Canaanites? [1]

With that baseline synchronism of an Exodus at the end of the Middle Kingdom I go back in my video series and look at other points of interest from the Old and Middle Kingdoms such as when the Old Kingdom came to an end, comparing the various theories about the pyramids and investigating who Joseph's pharaoh was and who was the pharaoh of the Exodus.

At the other end of the Egyptian timeline most revisionists are in agreement with the remainder of the conventional placement of dynasties from Dynasty 25 on as Ethiopian Dynasty pharaoh Tirharka was a contemporary of both Hezekiah and Assyrian king Sennacherib.

By moving Dynasty 13 forward to where Dynasty 18 is usually placed on the timeline, at least 4 extra dynasties have to be compressed into the same amount of time before the revised and conventional chronologies come together again around 700 BC. How is this to be achieved? How do we deal with this logjam of extra dynasties? Many different approaches have been proposed.

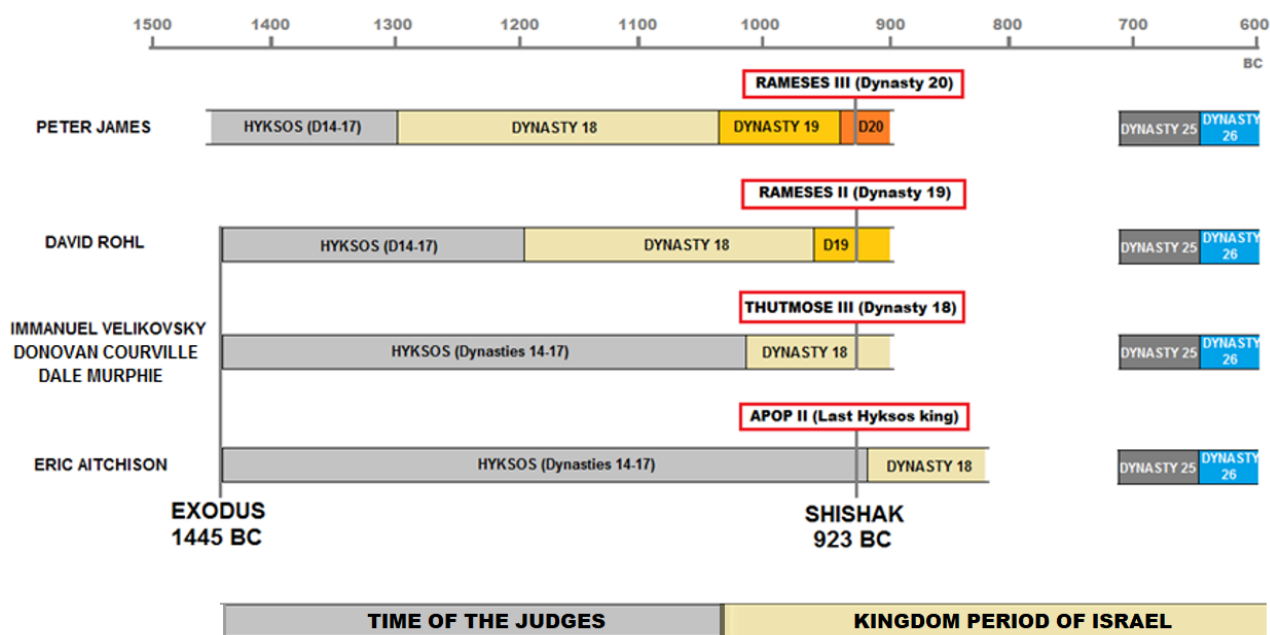
Following the proposed Middle Bronze Age Exodus, we have the period of the foreigners called the Hyksos (Dynasties 14 to 17). Convention assigns the period 235 years, Rohl 250, Velikovsky 400 and Josephus 511 years.

Then we have the New Kingdom. Where do we start Dynasty 18, who threw out the Hyksos? When did Rameses II's 19th Dynasty (and Dynasty 20) begin? Was Dynasty 19 separated from the Dynasty 18 by the Libyan and Ethiopian Dynasties as proposed by Velikovsky?

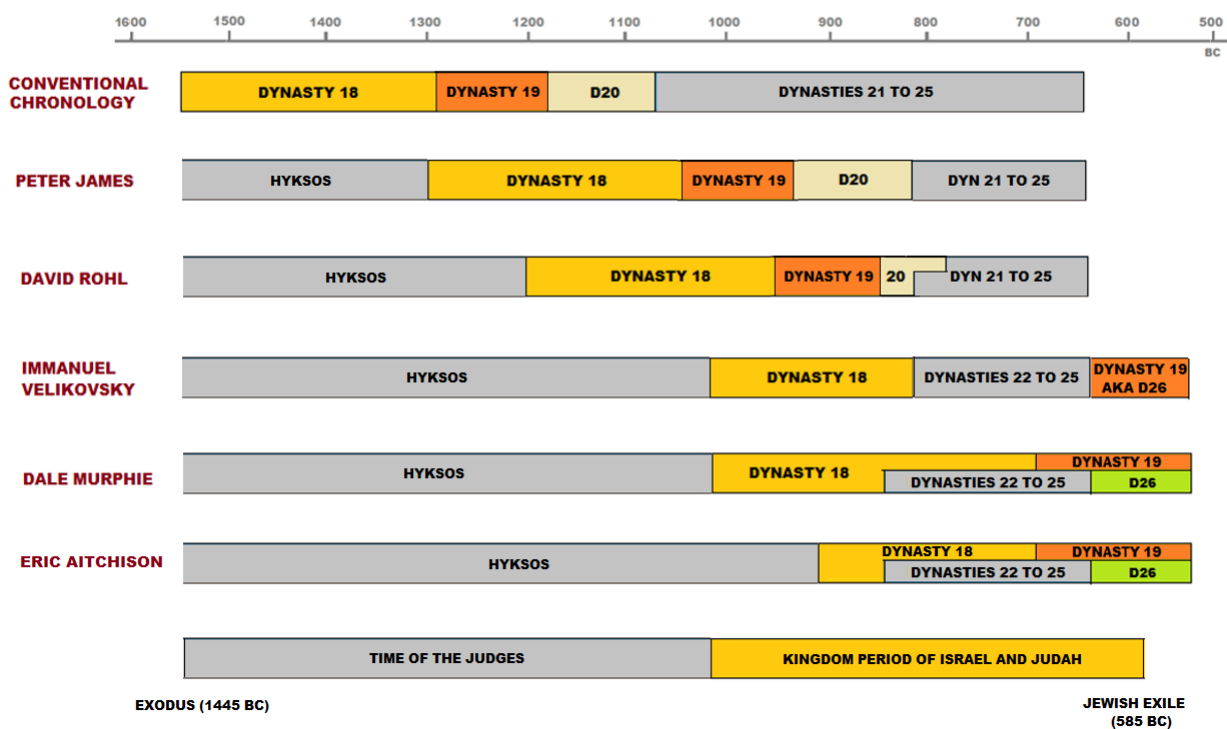
Finally, we have the Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties (Dynasties 21 to 24). Did they reign parallel with any of the New Kingdom dynasties?

The key to determining the correct Egyptian chronology is finding the correct place for Dynasties 18 and 19. Given that they are Egypt's most powerful and two of the best documented dynasties it's hard to imagine that there's such disagreement amongst revisionist chronologists as to where to place them in time. The revisionists all place these dynasties between the time of the Judges and the time of the Jewish exile, a time of great interest for Bible scholars, hence my particular interest in this topic.

## THE LOGJAM OF DYNASTIES PROBLEM



## DIFFERENT VIEWS ON WHERE DYNASTIES 18 AND 19 SHOULD BE PLACED IN TIME



To find the correct place for Dynasties 18 and 19 and determine which is the best revised chronology to fit the archaeological evidence one must resolve three key problems:

- 1) Who was the Egyptian pharaoh Shishak who plundered the Temple in the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam?
- 2) When in the Bible's history were the el Amarna letters written? The el Amarna letters are the foreign correspondence of Akhenaten's capital city that were written in the late 18th Dynasty when Egypt controlled the lands of Israel and Syria.
- 3) Did the Libyan and Ethiopian Dynasties rule in between the 18th and 19th Dynasties?

Solve those 3 problems and find the right place for Dynasty 18 and Dynasty 19 and you will be able to determine which is the best revised chronology.

## Who was Shishak?

Based on a similarity of name, Champollion, some 150 years ago, made the conventional link between the biblical Shishak and Sheshonk I of the 22nd Dynasty that the conventional chronology still supports to this day. The link seemed to work when you added up all the reign lengths of the Libyan kings without factoring in any parallel rule.

One of David Rohl's key pieces of evidence calling for a reduction of Egypt's third dark age (The Libyan and Ethiopian Dynasties) is from the Serapeum. He states that:

One so far inexplicable aspect of the finds from the Serapeum is the complete lack of stelae for the whole of the 21st Dynasty and for the first half of the 22nd Dynasty. Of the 311 stelae found in the Lesser Vaults (including the 73 recently unearthed) not one single inscription can be attributed to the kings from Smenides to Takelot I - a period assumed to have lasted around 195 years [2].

Ironically, despite their differences on the placement of the New Kingdom dynasties, David Rohl, Peter James and Immanuel Velikovsky are all on the same page in assigning an overall length of 160 years to the Third Intermediate Period, instead of the conventional 400 years. If this reduction is correct, this alone reduces the dates for the New Kingdom pharaohs by a minimum of 240 years. Rohl's New Chronology reduces the date of the Egyptian New Kingdom by a further century, compared with James and Velikovsky, and as a result has to overlap the 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty and the Third Intermediate Period, causing a host of changes, not required by the Centuries of Darkness and Velikovsky chronologies. [3]

David Rohl does a careful examination of the Palestinian places noted in the Karnak inscription of Sheshonk I [4]. He shows Jerusalem was absent in the listing and that he skirted north of Judah and that his prime activity was in the northern kingdom of Israel. This is the very opposite of Shishak's campaign! Jeroboam I was living in Egypt before the split of the two kingdoms (1 Kings 12:2) and would have been allied to Egypt. Shishak, in addition to plundering the Temple in Jerusalem, conquered the fortified cities of Judah (2 Chronicles 12:4).

David Rohl's chronology is heavily based on his synchronism of Rameses II (19th Dynasty) as the biblical Shishak. His identification relies on three pieces of evidence. The first is a brief mention on a block in the Ramesseum that Rameses II had been to Jerusalem [5]. I believe this detail to be correct but it does not prove the connection with Shishak on its own.

The second piece of evidence is the phonetic derivation of Shishak from the -ses at the end of Rameses' name [6]. Assuming this to be correct it can apply to any pharaoh with the name Rameses (of which there were a few) and also any pharaoh named Thutmose.

The third piece of evidence in Rohl's dating was evidence of an eclipse at Ugarit very soon after the death of Amenhotep III of the late 18th Dynasty. Based on astronomical retrocalculation, he dated this eclipse to 1012 BC which gave a general confirmation of the time for Shishak around the reign of Rameses II as well as his start date for the 18th Dynasty of 1194 BC. Rohl's dating of the eclipse was based on an erroneous dating of the tablet from Ugarit (KTU 1.78), which was actually from the last level at Ugarit, over a century after the Amarna period. Bernard Newgrosh discusses the remaining dating possibilities in *Chronology at the Crossroads*, concluding:

It may be that the minority opinion was correct all along and that KTU 1.78 does not actually record an eclipse event! [7]

There is one serious conflict with the biblical data that is caused by the start dates for Dynasty 18 for both revised chronologies of Rohl and James.

We know that the pharaohs of Dynasty 18 made many campaigns into Palestine. The Berlin Pedestal records a mid-18th Dynasty pharaoh making explicit reference to conquering Canaan, Ashkelon and Israel. The Bible, on the other hand, makes zero reference to Egypt entering their land in the time of the Judges despite the references to many neighbouring nations oppressing them at one time or another.

To place the 18th Dynasty during the time of the Judges, as do Rohl and James, is a genuine mismatch between the biblical data and archaeology.

Also, Rohl's Shishak synchronism places the reign of Seti the Great and the early part of Rameses II's reign contemporary with King Solomon. Both rulers had military garrisons and left victory stelae at Beth Shean in Israel. This is yet another major mismatch with the Bible. Solomon's reign was a peaceful one and he would have had no need to call on Egypt to fight his other neighbours.

There is a wall at the temple of Karnak that has an inscription of Thutmose III giving an astoundingly large offering to Amun. There are tonnes and tonnes of gold, silver and bronze objects being offered. Connect that with the booty of Shishak from the Temple in Jerusalem and you would have an astonishing synchronism that far outweighs the evidence offered by David Rohl for his synchronism.

John Bimson wrote an article in the SIS journal arguing against Velikovsky's prime synchronism of Thutmose III being the biblical Shishak. He wrote:

I also encountered problems with his identification of Thutmose III as the biblical Shishak. When examining the Karnak relief that Velikovsky interpreted as showing booty from Solomon's temple, I noted: 'Many of the objects are pure Egyptian in style and ornamentation, e.g. the common occurrence of the uraeus, (nos. 15, 58, 59, 60, 68, 77), several Egyptian style human figures (nos. 35, 69, 91, 173, 174) and the use of the cartouche as a decorative motif (nos. 11, 149, 172, 183) – in one case specifically the cartouche of Thutmose III'. [8]

John Bimson's case against this synchronism appears to be a straw man argument. It is possible that the vast amount of what Thutmose III offers to Amun is a composite of mostly booty from the Temple in Jerusalem and supplemented by some locally made objects as noted by Bimson. Velikovsky had already anticipated this objection when he wrote:

A few animal heads (lions) with the sign of the uraeus on their foreheads and the head of a hawk are wrought on the lids of some cups. These cups might have been brought from the palace Solomon had built for his Egyptian wife. [9]

Some examples of the Temple booty on this relief include an exact match of 100 basins of gold and 300 shields of gold to what was in the Temple according to the Bible [10] and this argues very strongly in favour of the items being one and the same as the treasure taken by Shishak from the Temple of Jerusalem.

Eric Aitchison places Shishak near the end of the Hyksos period but offers no archaeological evidence for Shishak being a Hyksos king [11]. If the Hyksos were Amalekites as claimed by Velikovsky (disputed by Eric) this would have Solomon marrying an Amalekite princess, an unlikely scenario given the bad blood between the nations.

If Rameses the Great, well known for his boasting, had plundered the Temple of God as believed by David Rohl and took back such a phenomenal amount of gold, silver and bronze objects would there not be a great boast showing the treasures of the Temple on some temple wall as well like Thutmose III's at the Temple of Karnak? And ditto for Peter James' Shishak candidate Rameses III in his Temple at Medinet Habu! The lack of such a booty record by those two Rameses is very telling in determining just who the real biblical Shishak was.

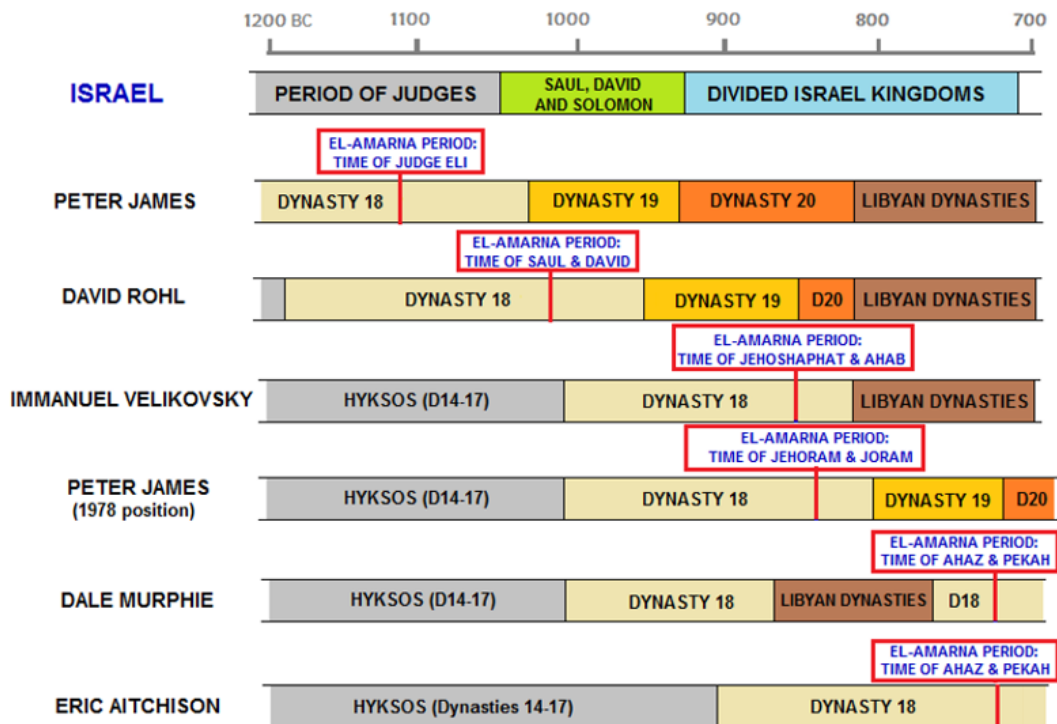
Having equated Thutmose III as the biblical Shishak, Velikovsky made further connections with the early 18th Dynasty and early kings of Israel. He connected Saul's campaign against the Amalekites with an enormous expeditionary force of over 200 000 men playing an important role in assisting the Theban kings in driving out the Hyksos from Egypt [12].

He believed Solomon was married to the daughter of Thutmose I, matching the early LBA destruction of Gezer which acted as a "dowry" for the marriage [13]. He also equated Queen Hatshepsut as the Queen of Sheba [14]. Josephus referred to the Queen of Sheba as being a "queen of Egypt and Ethiopia" [15].

## **The Dating of the el Amarna Letters**

The el Amarna letters were the foreign correspondence of Amenhotep III and his son, the heretical king Akhenaten who both reigned towards the end of the 18th dynasty. When in the Bible's history were the el Amarna letters written? If we can find a match with biblical events in the letters, that can help determine when the later 18th dynasty ruled.

## THE VARIOUS PLACEMENTS OF THE LATE 18TH DYNASTY EL AMARNA PERIOD



The “earliest” reference to Jerusalem outside the Bible is found in the el Amarna letters where it is referred to as “Urusalim”. The Bible tells us that the city was known as Jebus before it was conquered by David. Reference to the name Jerusalem could be seen as an anomaly with this el Amarna reference since convention places this in the time of the early Judges. Peter James places it in the late Judges. David Rohl places the time of the letters in the early part of David’s life before his conquest of Jebus. Jerusalem is mentioned a number of times in the books of Joshua and Judges but these are likely to be editorial updates from a later time. In Joshua 18:28 and Judges 19:10 it says “Jebus (which [or that] is Jerusalem)”.

David Rohl claims that Saul is Labaya, governor of Shechem, and that the Habiru (Apiru) of the el-Amarna letters are David and his army and that Dadua in one letter is a reference to David and Ayab is Joab [16]. One online author commenting on his evidence writes:

Labayu was governor of Shechem, whereas Saul lived in the vicinity of Gibeon [Gibea]. Labayu was killed by citizens of Gina, Saul committed suicide after being defeated by the Philistines at the foot of the Gilboa mountains (1 Samuel 31:4). Three of his four sons died in the same battle (1 Samuel 31:2). Several letters dating from after Labayu’s death speak about his two sons who collaborated with the Habiru and gave them pieces of land (EA 287).

The Amarna letters don’t mention the Philistines, whereas Saul had to fight the Philistines throughout his reign (1 Samuel 14:52) [17].

Alan Montgomery states:

Rohl’s placement of the Amarna letters in the days of Saul and David is unconvincing. The conflict in Saul’s time was Israel versus Philistia. The whole tenor of the Amarna period is the intrigue of several mischievous states, mainly Damascus, vying for power under the nose of a stronger Egyptian overlord [18].

Velikovsky placed the time of the el Amarna letters in the time of Ahab and Jehoshaphat. Before his rejection of Velikovsky’s placement of the 18th Dynasty Peter James wrote an article making, in my opinion, a better case for time of the letters being one generation later in the time of their sons. I quote here the conclusion of his 1978 article:

The question of the ‘Arabians that were near the Cushites’ [2 Chronicles 21:16] has been a vexed one for Biblical scholars. Eva Danelius and Martin Sieff... have already drawn attention to the presence of Arabian colonies in Ethiopia...the solution to the problem of the ‘Arabians that were near the Cushites’ is clear – they were simply conscripts of the Egyptian army from the ‘Kassi lands’ that were on service in Palestine...Their sack [EA287] of Abdi-Hiba’s palace was evidently part of a concerted plan of the Philistines, timed to coincide with their own invasion of Judah. And if Velikovsky’s reading of Bit-Shulman [House of Solomon] is correct, Philistines from Keilah entered Jerusalem and occupied the Temple Mount.

To sum up: the disasters that befell Jehoram of Judah and Abdi-Hiba of Jerusalem were identical. Both suffered revolts of their subject territories from Philistia to Edom. During the reigns of both, the Philistines invaded and swept right across Judah, entering Jerusalem itself, in concert with the sack of the king's palace by "men of the land of Kasi" or men "that were near the Cushites".

These peculiar circumstances could hardly be duplicated in such detail after a period of five hundred years. It is clear that Velikovsky's general placement of the el Amarna letters in the mid-ninth century must be correct, and that the modification of his original model suggested here, that Abdi-Hiba was Jehoram rather than Jehoshaphat, is preferable. [19]

Peter James produced no problems in this evidence for his rejection of this synchronism. It was the evidence of Egyptian genealogies (discussed later in this article) that led to his rejection of this position.

In Dale Murphie's chronology, the el Amarna letters are placed after the additional kings he adds into Dynasty 18. This forces him to place the el Amarna letters a century later than Velikovsky does where Eric Aitchison also places them. They have the time of the el Amarna letters in the 8th century BC (late 700's BC) when the Assyrians were very active threatening the land of Israel.

Dale Murphie and Eric Aitchison have proposed that Abdi-Heba, king of Urusalim is Ahaz (Hezekiah's father). Eric Aitchison proposes that the Habiru were the Assyrians who were threatening Israel and Judah at this time [20].

In EA-287 Abdi-Heba says that "the Habiru are attempting to take Jerusalem." The Assyrians only attempted to take Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah, NOT in the reign of Ahaz. Abdi-Heba could not have been Hezekiah either. Abdi-Heba means servant of Heba, a Hittite goddess. A godly king like Hezekiah would not have addressed the pharaoh as my sun-god as Abdi-Heba did in EA-288.

The major antagonists in the el Amarna letters are the Syrian kings who are relatively quiet in the time around Ahaz. The late 700's BC is a very poor fit for the time of the Amarna letters as it is clear from the Amarna letters that Judah and Syria are under the hegemony of Egypt when they are written. The mid to late 800's BC is a much better fit for the geopolitics of the Levant than either the century before or the century after.

## Dark Ages

Canadian scholar Alan Montgomery, in his book *Ages in Order*, presents the change that happened in Greek chronology [21], thanks to Sir Flinders Petrie offering the "new" Egyptian BC dates to date the Mycenaean age of the Trojans that Homer wrote about. Mycenaean pottery had been found in great abundance at the short-lived 18th Dynasty capital of Akhetaten, today called el Amarna, establishing a clear link between the Mycenaean age and the 18th Dynasty.

Prior to the discovery, the Mycenaean Age had been dated between 1050 and 700 BC. With Petrie's new date for Akhenaten that date range had to be revised to between 1550 and 1200 BC, against the objections of Greek archaeologist Torr. Nearly 500 years were inserted into Greek history, without any local Greek history to fill in the gap, which became known as the Greek Dark Age.

There is written local history on either side of the Greek Dark Age, with archaeologists claiming writing ceased for hundreds of years before it re-emerged with the start of the Greek alphabet around 750 BC [22]. To deal with that embarrassing absence of written history, the time period for the pottery sequence, known as Geometric pottery that was produced in the early Iron Age, is stretched backwards to fill in that massive gap in time.

Alan Montgomery explains how Late Geometric pottery, which is normally dated to the 700's BC, showed up in the traditional site for Troy in the same level (7B) as Mycenaean pottery, which, supposedly, dates to 500 years earlier. It was found underneath (earlier than) the Late Bronze destruction level [23]. The contemporary nature of Mycenaean pottery and Late Geometric pottery is conveniently ignored to maintain the conventional paradigm that the Late Bronze Age ended around 1200 BC.

There is a similar Dark Age gap in Turkey thanks to the date provided by the synchronism of Rameses II with one of the last Hittite emperors, Hattusilis III, with whom he made a peace treaty. Velikovsky claimed that this gap is artificial, due to the faulty Egyptian dates that were transferred to Greece and Turkey when synchronisms with Egyptian rulers were made.

Because we have the written history of the Bible to fill in those same centuries there is no Dark Age in Israel. If a pharaoh from an earlier dynasty than Sheshonk I (Dynasty 22) was Shishak, then the effect in Israel is that the Iron Age is overstretched too far back in time. If an earlier pharaoh than Sheshonk I was Shishak, then Dynasty 22 ruled later than where it is placed and the Iron Age didn't go back as far as 1200 BC as is conventionally taught.

One example of how this affects the interpretation of archaeology in the land of Israel is looking for evidence of the Golden Age of Solomon. Solomon is conventionally dated to the Iron Age, contemporary with the Libyan dynasties in

Egypt, due to the Shishak / Sheshonk I synchronism. If Solomon's time was, however, in the Late Bronze Age, then archaeologists will assume Solomon's golden age was a myth if they can't find anything of his prosperity in the Iron Age strata. They will ignore any Late Bronze Age evidence assuming that evidence is from the time of the Judges and even assume such evidence is Canaanite rather than Israelite.

The prosperity of the Late Bronze is a much better fit than the general poverty of the early Iron Age. David Rohl dates the Late Bronze palace at Megiddo with its fabulous finds of gold and ivory to Solomon's time [24]. Standard chronology attributes this wealthy palace to the earlier Canaanites.

Another example of the different interpretations of the archaeology in Israel, depending on one's chronological view, is the transition between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age in Israel.

There is agreement amongst archaeologists that the Late Bronze Age was a period of prosperity in the land and then, when it transitions to the Iron Age, there is a sudden drop in the material culture and the evidence shows that the land was much poorer in the Iron Age. There is also evidence of great destruction at the transition at this time.

The conventional chronology places the start of the Iron Age around 1200 BC so this evidence is interpreted by those supporting the Late Exodus Rameses II theory as evidence for the time when Israel conquered the land and dispossessed the Canaanites who were much richer than the poorer Israelites. The destruction at this time is interpreted as either the conquest by the Israelites or the destruction caused by the Sea Peoples who are often identified as the Philistines.

Those who support a 1450 BC Exodus date but maintain the conventional chronology have to explain why there is a sudden destruction and material change half way into the time of the Judges.

David Rohl places the end of the Late Bronze Age around 850 BC and he interprets this evidence as the time of the Syrian incursions by Ben Hadad and Hazael into the Israelite tribal lands on the eastern side of the Jordan where many refugees would have fled west into Israel's hill country. The pottery data supports the view that the population movement was from the northern TransJordan area, not the southern TransJordan where the Israelites crossed the Jordan.

Immanuel Velikovsky places the end of the Late Bronze Age around 750 BC [25]. Archaeologists are aware of a massive collapse of civilisation around the entire Eastern Mediterranean and evidence of great earthquakes in Greece and Turkey at the end of the Late Bronze Age.

Velikovsky's revised date for this collapse around 750 BC puts it at the same time as the great earthquake of Uzziah spoken of in the Bible. Israel was expanding and very prosperous prior to 750 BC in the time of the reigns of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel. From around 750 BC, in addition to Uzziah's earthquake, the Assyrians took the tribes east of the Jordan into exile and the land plunged into a much poorer state as reflected in the early Iron Age pottery finds.

## **Dynasty 19 – Before, During or After the Libyan Dynasties?**

Now we come to problem 3 - Did the Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties rule in between the 18th and 19th Dynasties?

This is where the British scholars (Rohl, Bimson, James and others) have marshalled their strongest evidence against the Velikovskian model. The question is whether or not their evidence supporting the conventional view of Dynasty 19 following straight after Dynasty 18 is the smoking gun that they claim it to be.

There are four items of evidence used in support of the conventional view that Dynasty 19 followed straight after Dynasty 18 and before the Libyan Dynasties:

The synchronism of Suppiluliumas of EA letter 45 with Suppiluliumas I of the Hittite New Kingdom.

The conventional archaeological connection between Late Bronze II and the 19th Dynasty

Various genealogies that indicate no break between the dynasties

Architectural evidence from the Bubastite Portal at the Temple of Karnak

I devote one lecture in my video series to looking into the evidence against the separation of the two dynasties and the following lecture looking into the evidence in support of the separation of the two dynasties. I will attempt to concisely summarise the evidence here.

### **The Suppiluliumas Synchronism**

There is a Suppiluliumas in el Amarna letter 41. The tablet is damaged and where this king rules is not clear on the tablet. He is assumed to be one and the same as the Hittite emperor Suppiluliumas I. If so, he would have been a contemporary of Akhenaten. We know his son Mursilis was the enemy of Seti I, and after them the two sons of Mursilis, Hattusilis and Muwatallis, were contemporaries of Rameses II or Rameses the Great. Rameses the Great, after fighting the Hittites at the battle of Kadesh made a peace treaty with Hattusilis III.



If Hattusilis III's grandfather was the Suppiluliumas of that el Amarna letter, this would mean that Seti I of the 19th Dynasty lived a generation after Akhenaten and Tutankhamun of the 18th Dynasty. In reviewing evidence presented at a conference by Peter James, John Bimson writes:

Velikovsky's attempt to break these links by dividing Suppiluliumas into two people who lived at different times did not solve the problem, because a whole string of other characters were also involved. Thus, Velikovsky will not only have to devise 'two Suppiluliumas' to agree with his later dates for the 19th Dynasty - he will have to create two Azirus, Kings of Amurru, two Tusrattas, Kings of Mitanni, and two Hittite generals called Lupakki. Such a proliferation of exact duplicates renders the scheme incredible. [26]

Are the Suppiluliumas of the Amarna letters and the Hittite emperor Suppiluliumas I one and the same? Are the contemporary counterparts of Suppiluliumas I one and the same as those of the el Amarna period?

Barry Curnock has pointed out differences between the situations that existed in the time of Suppiluliumas I and the time of the Suppiluliumas of the el Amarna letter. One issue is who was in control of Alashiya (Cyprus). In the time of Suppiluliumas I it was under Hittite control, whereas it was independent in the el Amarna period. The area of Amurru, too, was further north in the time of Suppiluliumas I [27].

In relation to the similarities of persons claimed by Peter James and John Bimson he writes:

Throughout the Amarna letters, Aziru is a loyal vassal of the king of Egypt ... Historians can point to an implication in the treaty with Suppiluliumas that Aziru changed sides: 'Aziru knelt down at the feet of My Majesty and came from the gate of Egyptian territory'. This can not mean that Aziru changed from loyalty to Egypt to Hittite vassalage, because there is an unequivocal statement in a later Hittite treaty with Amurru (CTH105) that states that Aziru was a subject of the King of Hurri before he changed his allegiance to Hatti.

The Aziru and Etakamma of the Amarna letters had different allegiances to the Aziru and Etakamma of the Hittite treaties. It cannot be argued that they both changed sides. Although individuals with these names feature in both the records of Suppiluliumas and in the Amarna letters, the information about them is contradictory. [28]

### **Dynasty 19 – Late Bronze 2B or Iron 2?**

Mycenaean Greek Late Helladic 3A was abundantly found at Akhenaten's city Akhenaten, also known as el Amarna, which was abandoned as a capital after Akhenaten's reign. This solidly links the late 18th Dynasty with Late Helladic 3A pottery. This pottery is associated with the Late Bronze 2A period. Always immediately above (that is, chronologically after) Late Helladic 3A in Greek sites is pottery known as Late Helladic 3B, which is associated with the archaeological age known as Late Bronze 2B.

If the 19th Dynasty followed immediately after the 18th Dynasty, then the Greek pottery that should be found with Egyptian 19th Dynasty material should be Late Helladic 3B. Following on from that, the 20th dynasty should be found together with Iron Age I pottery if Manetho's sequence of dynasties is correct.

If however the 19th Dynasty was, as claimed by Velikovsky, separated from and was 150 plus years after the 18th dynasty then the pottery that should be found with Egyptian 19th Dynasty material should be Iron Age 2 pottery.

So, is Greek Late Helladic 3B pottery really contemporary with Dynasty 19 as claimed by conventional chronology and revisionist chronologists such as David Rohl? Or is this connection based on faulty assumptions?

In examining the evidence of this standard archaeological claim Alan Montgomery writes:

Martha Bell, an Egyptologist, states, 'Gurob Tomb 605 starts out as possibly the best dated vase context for Late Helladic IIIB in Egypt [Bell, p.62].' According to her, Late Helladic IIIB is found at Gurob in a tomb of the 19th Dynasty. The vase is a common Mycenaean stirrup jar identified as type F182. The vase was found in a casket in the tomb. It was accompanied by a scarab finger-ring belonging to User Maat Re Setepenre. She identified this name as the prenomen of Ramesses II of the 19th Dynasty...

Bell continued to write, 'Gurob Tomb 605, seemingly so secure, has areas of ambiguity upon careful examination.' [Bell, p. 73] What does 'areas of ambiguity' mean? She is pointing out that the casket found in Tomb 605 has a black background with yellow decoration. This developed in the mid-18th Dynasty and no examples of this coffin style are known in the 19th Dynasty [Bell, p. 65]. If no such coffins exist in the 19th Dynasty why would Bell ascribe the Gurob coffins to the early 19th Dynasty?

Suppose, the scarab finger-ring and the coffin did not belong to Ramesses II but to the Libyan pharaoh User Maat Re Setepenre Sheshonq III, 825-773 BC. It could also be Osorkon II or Pami, who also used this prenomen occasionally. This would contradict orthodoxy [29].

The fact that the prenomen name of Ramesses II was also shared by at least two of the Libyan pharaohs was a real eye-opener to me when I first ran across it in one of Alan Montgomery's papers. This clearly opens up the possibility that some scarabs have been misinterpreted as Dynasty 19 scarabs when they may, in reality, be scarabs of Libyan pharaohs.

Just because such scarabs with the prenomen of User Maat Re Setepenre are found with LH3B Mycenaean pottery, this does not automatically mean that they belong to Rameses II. They could just as easily be scarabs from one of the Libyan pharaohs who shared that same prenomen name.

The opposite problem occurs when artefacts of Ramesses II and Seti I appear in Iron 2 strata such as at Beth Shan and Tel Aphek. In order to maintain the conventional paradigm of the Manetho order of dynasties it is assumed that they came from Late Bronze 2 strata and were somehow moved.

Alan Montgomery discusses these finds:

This leaves the rather interesting case of Tel Aphek. Building 1104 in Level X12 was a Residence of an Egyptian governor that was destroyed by fire. Debris contained much Egyptian pottery, imported Mycenaean Late Helladic IIIA2 and Late Helladic IIIB1, local Canaanite pottery and three Late Bronze White Slip II bowls... Also found were a scarab and a plaque of Ramesses II...

What about the scarab of Ramesses II? Well, in a stone trough outside the gates of the Level X12 Residence, a scarab of User Maat Re Setepenre was found. This is the prenomen of Ramesses II. However, it is also possibly the prenomen of pharaoh Sheshonq III. The evidence per se is ambiguous. However, the 9th century D-stem would make the Libyan Dynasty a superior choice and thus the scarab more likely belongs to Sheshonq III, whose prenomen is also User Maat Re.

A plaque of Ramesses II was also found with his royal titles... Many have associated the plaque with the destruction of the Egyptian residence in X12 but Giveon notes it was found in an Iron IIA silo of the 10th century. It is not found in a Late Bronze IIB context. In fact, its Iron IIA context confirms the conclusions arrived at from the Beth Shean evidence.

Weinstein's study provided a wealth of 19th Dynasty material. His study reveals that the stratigraphic connections of the 19th Dynasty and the Late Bronze IIB are surprisingly weak and infrequent... From Weinstein's named or royal stratified locations, the Iron IIA levels at Beth Shan provide the best quality, and quantity evidence to connect the 19th Dynasty with stratigraphy...

The pedestal for the Beth Shan stelae is prima facie evidence that they were erected in situ. Both the Beth Shan and Aphek finds are found together with other Egyptian material that gives additional context... The idea that the Beth Shan stelae, buried for 300 years, had been moved from Level VII to Level Lower V by unknown persons who never claimed any credit is simply not credible. The value of the small finds of the 19th Dynasty material in Beth Shan Level V has been ignored. The Tel Aphek plaque of Ramesses II, supposedly left in Iron IIA by somebody 300 years after the Late Bronze IIB ended, is pure speculation.

There are many Neo-Hittite associations with the 9th to 7th century Neo-Assyrians. The New Kingdom Hittites have the same material culture and ought to be closely connected. To place them and the 19th Dynasty in the same centuries as the Neo-Hittites resolves most difficulties with small finds, art, weaponry, stelae, the tomb of Hiram as well as the stratigraphy. [30]

## Genealogical Evidence

John Bimson wrote the following in relation to genealogical evidence linking the New Kingdom dynasties:

So what was this emerging evidence that finally proved fatal to the Glasgow Chronology?... All kinds of solutions were tried: overlapping dynasties, overlapping reigns to shorten dynasties, looking for duplicate reigns that could be removed - but nothing would yield the drastic compression of Egyptian history that we needed. For example, two genealogies run all the way from the reign of Ramesses II, through the Third Intermediate Period, to the 26th Dynasty (in one case to the reign of Psamtik I, in the other to the reign of Necho II). [31]

One of these genealogies is the Memphite or Berlin Block Genealogy, a genealogy of priests which leaves little room in between Dynasty 18 and Dynasty 19. Chronologically, priest 2/11 is under Amenhotep III (D18), 2/10 is under Ay (D18), 2/8 is under Horemhab and 2/7 is under Seti I (D19). Based on this data it appears the two dynasties were close together and not separated as claimed by Velikovsky. Just how much stock can we place in these genealogies?

Bob Porter commenting on such genealogies wrote:

Perhaps the genealogies should not be taken too seriously as, even today, it is possible to buy oneself an impressive genealogy with little factual basis. The possibility of a Memphite priest knowing his genealogy back to the 11th Dynasty seems highly improbable or was he just cheating to get some extra status? [32]

Alan Montgomery further adds these comments:

Manetho is supported by the Berlin genealogy. The Berlin genealogy lists almost 50 High Priests of Ptah from the Middle Kingdom to the Third Intermediate Period. Some panels show the reign of the pharaoh in which the priest was inaugurated.

Unfortunately, this genealogy claims that every High Priest was a son of the previous High Priest. Since we know that the Libyan pharaohs gave the appointment of the High Priest of Ptah to a new family in the middle of their dynasty this cannot be true. Thus, the Berlin genealogy is not a true genealogy.

It has some other purpose and this fact limits its credibility for chronology and dynastic order... Manetho may have used the Berlin genealogy to order his dynastic history so they may not be independent sources. Manetho must stand or fall with the archaeological and historic evidences. [33]

John Bimson claims a document at Deir el-Medineh contains a genealogy of Neferhotep covering a small number of generations that starts with Dynasty 18 and goes through to Dynasty 20. This, however, seems to conflict with one leading authority on this site. In his 375-page authoritative work on Deir el-Medina entitled "Who's Who at Deir el-Medina" Benedict Davies states:

Our first solid documentation from the village of Deir el-Medina arises at the dawn of a new era in Egyptian history, the 19th Dynasty, more than 250 years after the foundation of the settlement" [34].

While the town appears to have been in existence during the 18th Dynasty, the solid documentation of the site begins with the 19th Dynasty. The connection here between the 18th and 19th Dynasties for the time that Neferhotep lived is on the basis of assuming that Haremhab in the genealogy is an 18th Dynasty pharaoh. The various copies of Manetho have Haremhab ruling after Tutankhamen's successor Ay but it is unclear whether he is the last pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty or the first king of the 19th Dynasty or some in-between ruler. There is no direct explicit evidence connecting Haremhab to the 18th Dynasty.

What is abundantly clear going through Davies' book on Deir el-Medina is the repetition of the same names in many of the genealogies. On closer inspection of the genealogies there is not enough information about certain individuals claimed to be under a certain pharaoh to be certain they are not some other individual with the same name.

### **Bubastite Portal**

David Rohl believes there is structural evidence at the Bubastite Portal at the Temple of Karnak, arguing that the Libyan dynasties followed both the 19th and 20th Dynasties. Eric Aitchison summarises this evidence and offers a counterargument to this point. He writes:

The Bubastite Portal, as described by Rohl, is wedged or squeezed in between a pylon wall built by Ramesses II and a free-standing temple built by Ramesses III...The chronological importance of the Bubastite Portal to David Rohl's quoted point is what it covers up or crowds out. That portion which abuts the Ramesses II wall crowds out a cartouche of that king. Thus it is argued that the Shoshenq Bubastite Portal was erected subsequent to Ramesses II [and Ramesses III] ...

[There is] disfigurement of those items on the left of the façade that abuts the wall against which the portal has been squeezed...There are distinct breaks between sections of the hieroglyphics that no self-respecting architect would accept...The implications of these scenes involving Iuput indicate that the original structure was dismantled and only the portal was cut to fit into the space between the two projects initiated by either of the attested Ramesses. This portal was not built in the position in which we currently find it...So it would appear from the Iuput evidence that the blocks, from wherever the Bubastite Portal and its attendant structures were, were cut down to fit into the space between the walls of the existing structures....

The point to make is that once it is accepted that knocking down and rebuilding was a common occurrence, and sometimes nothing was later deemed sacred...then it becomes very difficult to draw irrefutable chronological conclusions from the structures that we see there today. [35]

David Rohl, Peter James, John Bimson and others maintain the conventional order of dynasties for the New Kingdom. They have presented a number of points and arguments against changing the conventional order of dynasties for the New Kingdom period. While their arguments carry a certain amount of weight, they are certainly not the smoking gun those using this evidence would like us to believe. The counterarguments are more than reasonable without clutching at straws.

### **Hittite Archaeology and the Dating of Rameses II**

We have synchronistic evidence in relation to Shishak and the dating of the el Amarna letters in favour of Velikovsky's 18th dynasty placement. In trying to determine if there was a separation between Dynasties 18 and 19, the next step is establishing the true date for the reign of Rameses II.

As the absolute BC dates for the New Kingdom of the Hittite empire come thanks to the synchronism between Rameses II and Hattusilis III who signed a peace treaty, we can examine the archaeology of the Hittite realm and see where the local archaeology, without reference to Rameses II, wants to date the Hittite New Kingdom.

Alan Montgomery writes the following:

At Gordion after World War II, the excavator, an American named Young, identified a stratum related to the time of King Midas in Level III. The east-Greek pottery and terracotta were familiar to Greek archaeologists, who dated the pottery to the 8th century. However, it was pointed out that the site also contained Hittite pictographic hieroglyphics in Level II. As the New Hittite Empire ended in the 13th century their hieroglyphics in Level II were problematic. The top stratum Level I was clearly identified as belonging to the time of the Persians ....

The Level III stratum was identified as belonging to the Phrygians and dated to the eighth century. The Phrygian kingdom came to an end when it was attacked by the Cimmerians in 687 BC. This left the Level II stratum sandwiched neatly between these two very precise dates 687 and 548 BC.

The problematic Level II stratum contained a copious amount of Hittite pottery and tell-tale pictographic hieroglyphics. Young claimed that the clayey soil containing the imperial New Hittite seals and material came to Gordion from Hittite territory and had formed a four-meter layer over all of the Gordion. Who had done this? Young thought it was the Persians. Young states: 'For the purposes of dating, the shards or layer of clay are of little use; they are almost entirely Hittite. (The pottery was) a deposit already in the clay when it was brought in from elsewhere to be laid down over the surface of the Phrygian city mound' [Young, p. 12].

Young's explanation fails to address why the Persians would want to perform this task. In no other site did any conquering power perform such a feat. It would take an immense amount of manpower to transport such a layer over 100 miles. It had no apparent advantage. What earthly purpose could such a procedure accomplish? [36]

In the top two layers at Hattusas, the Hittite capital, there was a mix of Greek pottery from the 7th century BC and Hittite seals and pottery supposedly from the 13th century BC [37]. Accepting the dates for the Hittite empire, due to the Rameses II synchronism, right across Anatolia there was found a gap of about 450 years between the Hittite empire and the next period dated to 750 BC by the archaeologists [38]. This is exactly the same phenomenon that was created when Egyptian dates were applied to the Mycenaean era in Greece.

The Hittite Empire in Central Turkey is said to have come to an end around 1200 BC. The great 'Neo-Hittite' cities of northern Syria, dating from supposedly the 9th and 8th centuries, are actually indistinguishable from the Hittite Empire cities of Central Turkey, supposedly of the 15th and 14th centuries. We see an identical culture in two areas supposedly separated by hundreds of years, yet there is much evidence to indicate that the dating applied to one of these areas needs to be shifted so the cultures of both areas are placed at the same period in time.

Alan Montgomery summarises the situation the following way:

Imperial Hittite sites in Anatolia lack occupation between 1200 and 750 BC according to convention, in a way that is reminiscent of the Greek Dark Age. The solution is also the same. Revise the Egyptian chronology downward so that it agrees with Greek and Assyrian chronologies.

This requires that the treaty between Ramesses II and Hattusili III be moved from the 13th to the 7th or 6th century. The conventional Egyptian assigned dates must be ignored. This closes the Dark Ages of Anatolia and no stratigraphic conflicts arise. The New Hittite Empire art, science and law reflect Assyrian influence of the 7th and 6th centuries...

In addition, the East Greek pottery and terracottas that occur in Gordion and Hattusas are dated to the New Kingdom Hittites material from the 8th to 6th century. Two independent chronologies argue for these dates against a single chronological system, namely the Egyptian. [39]

The recent discovery of a colossus of Psamtek I that was originally thought to be a Rameses II colossus statue adds further support to Velikovsky's Rameses II placement around 600 BC.

In my lecture I also examine Velikovsky's evidence of the rock carvings at Yazilikaya and Boghazkoi, Velikovsky's evidence of similar data between the annals of Rameses II and the events involving the biblical Necho, as well as his evidence of similarities between Rameses II's battle of Kadesh and Nebuchadnezzar's battle of Carchemish.

Rameses II fought the Hittites while Necho fought the Babylonians. This situation, when arguing that the two battles were one and the same, led to arguably Velikovsky's greatest mistake in equating the Neo-Babylonian empire with the Hittites. Barry Curnock sees the two empires as allies in the battle of Carchemish [40].

Barry Curnock advises about the development and use of seals in the Hittite empire:

In the conventional dating of the two Hittite periods, where the Kingdoms of Hattusas, in Central Turkey, were followed centuries later by the Neo-Hittite civilisation, in Northern Syria, the use of stamp seals is followed by the use of cylinder seals. This is the opposite to the shift apparent in Assyria and Babylonia of the first millennium. Cylinder seals were used in the 9th and 8th centuries and these were replaced by stamp seals in the 7th century.

With the Hittite New Kingdom re-dated to the 7th century, we find that the use of seals by the Hittites parallels exactly the use in Assyria. Hittite cylinder seals are found in the Neo-Hittite settlements and date from the 9th and 8th centuries and Hittite stamp seals from the time of Suppiluliumas, Mursilis and Muwatallis are from the 7th century [41].

I would emphasise that this problem highlighted here regarding the development of seals with the conventional chronology of the Hittite Empire is NOT corrected by the chronologies of David Rohl and Peter James, who place Suppiluliumas, Mursilis and Muwatallis no later than the 10th century BC.

In Greece and western Turkey, the Dark Age gap is consistently found to be around 450-500 years, which matches how far out the 18th dynasty dating is, if we accept Velikovsky's synchronism of Thutmose III with the biblical Shishak.

In central Turkey and Syria, the dating gaps between the accepted dates and when items would be dated without the Rameses II synchronism are consistently found to be over 600 years and this is due solely to dating the treaty of the 19th dynasty pharaoh Rameses II with the Hittites to the 1200's BC.

The difference in the dating gaps in Greece and Turkey of around 150 years, where one area obtains its absolute BC dates due to the conventional dating of the 18th dynasty and the other due to the conventional dating of the 19th dynasty, can be explained if the two dynasties were separated by 150 years as argued by Velikovsky.

Egypt of the 19th Dynasty was considerably changed from that of the 18th Dynasty. The eminent Egyptologist Alan Gardiner wrote of the 19th Dynasty comparing it with the 18th Dynasty:

It is impossible not to notice the marked deterioration of the art, the literature, and indeed the general culture of the people. The language which they wrote approximates more closely to the vernacular and incorporates many foreign words; the copies of ancient texts are incredibly careless. [42]

Further to that Alan Montgomery adds:

Velikovsky supported his claim that the 22nd Dynasty succeeded the 18th Dynasty with many evidences that suggest a close connection of the 18th and 22nd Dynasties [Velikovsky, 1980]. Chalice made in the latter part of the 18th Dynasty and in the early 22nd Libyan Dynasty appear to be made with the same craftsmanship and artistry. Egyptologists would have assigned the Libyan chalices to the 18th Dynasty were it not for the inscriptions of Sheshonq I [Velikovsky 1980, p. 6]. The skills of the chalice craft did not survive the 22nd Dynasty. Thus there are no similar chalices known in the 19th, 20th or 21st Dynasties.

The Libyan Pharaoh Osorkon II celebrated a royal jubilee in his 22nd year by reading a jubilee text in the Temple of Amon. Kitchen states, "this very text is nothing more than a word-for-word copy of just such a text as occurs over the king carried in procession for a jubilee of Amenhotep III depicted at Soleb Temple...." [Kitchen 1986, p. 321]. Osorkon II supposedly overlooked in the many jubilee texts of the 19th Dynasty in favour of a 500-year-old text of the 18th Dynasty. Why did Osorkon II not use a more recent text? [43]

If we accept a 7th century date for Rameses II, the stratigraphy across the ancient world shows multiple levels of occupation in between the levels contemporary with the late 18th Dynasty, noted by the findings of Mycenaean LH3 pottery and the levels where 7th century pottery has been found.

Alan Montgomery shows this at sites such as Rome (several levels in between Apennine & Villanovan), Troy (Level 6 – LH3A & Level 8 - 7th century), Beth Shemesh (Level 4 – LH3A & Level 2 - 7th century) and Beth Shean (Level 8 – LH3A & Level 5 - Rameses II & Seti I stela) [44].

This evidence is the most crucial evidence against the chronologies of Dale Murphie and Eric Aitchison who place Rameses II in the 7th century BC but still connect the 18th and 19th dynasties.

This stratigraphic evidence also argues against the chronology of Emmett Sweeney who accepts Velikovsky's 18th and 19th dynasty synchronisms but keeps the dynasties together by rejecting the Bible's richly detailed chronology [45].

Sweeney dates Solomon and the Shishak conquest to the 8th century BC by rejecting the Bible's chronology. He makes the Neo-Assyrian kings, conquerors of the northern kingdom of Israel, one and the same as the Medo-Persian kings, who ruled 200 years later and were the liberators of the Jews exiled to Babylon. While highlighting some similarities between them he ignores a whole host of differences between them which I cover in my original volume and may turn into a future article.

The evidence used to date Rameses II to the 7th century BC argues against the chronologies of Donovan Courville and David Down who support Velikovsky's 18th dynasty placement and have the 19th Dynasty and Libyan dynasties running parallel to each other.

In the same lecture on the evidence for the separation of Dynasties 18 and 19 I also examine the question of whether Dynasties 19 and 26 were one and the same as proposed by Velikovsky or parallel as now believed by my friend Alan Montgomery. In my mind the jury is very much out on that one. There is good data supporting both views and it seems almost contradictory. I believe more work needs to be done in this area even though it doesn't affect the overall placements of the dynasties in time.

I feel there are too many similarities between events of the biblical Necho and Rameses II to write them off as coincidences from two separate dynasties. I personally support Velikovsky's view that the biblical Necho was Rameses II though I don't necessarily equate him with Nekau Wehembre of Dynasty 26. I also support his view that Psammetichus of Herodotus' writings is Seti I, even though he may or may not be equated with Psamtek I of Dynasty 26, despite Herodotus including Psammetichus' exploits in a section covering the pharaohs of Dynasty 26. The absence of any artifacts of Nekau and Psamtek at Beth Shean, even though we have artifacts from there of Rameses II and Seti I, is very telling.

In a later lecture I look at the placement of Dynasty 20 and its most prominent pharaoh, Rameses III, who defeated the Sea Peoples, conventionally thought to have wreaked havoc across the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Velikovsky also argued for a separation of Dynasties 19 and 20 with the latter being as late as the 4th century BC during the latter Persian empire.

The Great Harris Papyrus from the 20th Dynasty gives evidence of a foreign occupation ('overthrown from without'), before the dynasty began. This was followed, some time later, by rule by a foreigner, called Arsa. So which foreign occupation was it referring to? The Libyans? The Babylonians (as proposed by Eric Aitchison)? Or the Persians? Some evidence against Velikovsky's solution has been published [46], but his major argument still stands: Egypt was ruled by Arsames, Rameses calls his enemy Persia, there are several cultural and architectural similarities, and a sequence of correlations with the 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty priests was identified. Support for Velikovsky's theory comes (unintentionally) from the expert in Nubian history, Robert Morkot. Commenting on a Nubian relief sculpture, conventionally dated to the 4<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC:

Hans Goedicke, an Egyptologist renowned for his controversial ideas, commented that altogether the style of the relief, the royal and divine names and epithets suggested a date closer to the 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty than the Ptolemaic period. One can't help but agree. [47]

Again, referring to two Nubian kings conventionally dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC:

The form of their titles and the style of the few relief fragments attributable to them have caused them to be designated 'neo-Ramesside'. But this 'neo-Ramesside' phase is strikingly anachronistic. If it does belong to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC there is nothing in the period preceding it in Nubia, nor in contemporary Egypt, with which it can be paralleled. [48]

## Conclusion

When I began my comparative analysis of all the various revised chronologies, I was prepared to change my views and go where the evidence led, despite how emotionally I may have felt about it. Velikovsky's chronology, after his passing in 1979, for the most part fell out of favour, as objections began to mount as argued by revisionists such as Rohl, James, Bimson and others. Only in recent years with the work of other revisionists such as Barry Curnock and Alan Montgomery have those challenges been more fully answered.

The models offered by David Rohl and Peter James have their own problems including clear mismatches with biblical data. In addition, they only partly close up the Dark Age gap. Peter James, as evidenced in the title of his book "Centuries of Darkness", highlighted many gaps in different places and most of them were 400 plus years in size yet he only offers a 250-year reduction of Egyptian New Kingdom dates. Their 350 year and 250-year reductions respectively do not resolve the dating problems in the Hittite realm and aren't sufficient to bring the histories of the Hittite empire and the Neo-Hittite city states together despite their obvious cultural similarities.

In the end I was very surprised at just how well the Velikovskian chronology held up under closer scrutiny. While I support his dynasty placements, I believe some minor corrections need to be made to his views, such as moving the el Amarna period a generation forward and rejecting the equation of the Neo-Babylonians with the Hittites. Velikovsky did not allow preconceptions of the Manetho order of dynasties to affect where he placed them but rather let the archaeology (especially from outside Egypt) point the way to his conclusions. This approach served him well.

I believe the "original" revisionist chronology of Velikovsky (with a couple of minor modifications) has come through the challenges and emerged as the revisionist chronology that best fits the archaeology and the biblical data.

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38. The date for the post-Hittite levels at Hattusas may be considerably later than 750BC. See B Curnock, The Hittite Old Kingdom, *SIS Review 2021:1*, p. 44.
39. *op.cit.* [21], pp.108-109.
40. FORUM 1 The Battle of Kadesh: The Debate Continues, *SIS C&C Review 2017:3*, pp. 30,32.
41. Barry Curnock, private communication. The style of Hittite stamp seals is identical to those of Assyria, a picture of the king is surrounded by a cuneiform inscription. Hittite seals are described in O R Gurney, *The Hittites*, Book Club Associates, 1975, pp. 202-206. One of the best examples of Assyrian stamp seals is that of Sargon II, dated to 715BC: British Museum item SM 2276.
42. Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, Clarendon Press, 1961, p.247.
43. *op.cit.*, [21], p.216-217.
44. Alan Montgomery, *The 18th Dynasty and Stratigraphy*, <http://www.rogerswebsite.com/Velikovsky/Alan/The18thDynastyandStratigraphy.pdf>, p.1-7.
45. Emmett Sweeney, *Ramesesides, Medes and Persians*, The Velikovskian, 2001, Vol.5 No.2, pp.15-16.
46. D Keith Mills, Rameses III, Nectanebo I, and the so-called Demotic Chronicle, *SIS Review 2016:1*, pp. 20-29.
47. Peter James, *Centuries of Darkness*, Jonathan Cape, 1992, p. 217.
48. R. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers*, Rubicon, 2000, p.147.

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Catastrophic Thinking: Extinction and the Value of Diversity from Darwin to the Anthropocene, by David Sepkoski. University of Chicago Press, 2020.**

I must begin with a confession: I was completely unaware of the existence of this book until Ev Cochrane drew it to my attention late last year. Up to that point, I was also unaware of the existence of the book's author, David Sepkoski, who is the Thomas M. Siebel Chair in the History of Science at the University of Illinois. My ignorance of Sepkoski's existence was particularly embarrassing because his father, J. John ("Jack") Sepkoski, was one of the most prominent pioneers of neocatastrophism during the 1980s. I paid tribute to his work in a presentation entitled 'Nemesis for Evolutionary Gradualism?' at an SIS meeting in London in the autumn of 1987 and again in an article with the same title in *C&C Review X* in the following year, particularly on pp. 58-59, where I wrote: