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AN ANCIENT HISTORY REVIEW

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History of the Ancient Near East

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A Personal Note

The following "unsolicited" review of three volumes of a series on ancient history (from c.1500 B.C. to c.300 B.C.) by a single author, is neither an authorized single book review, nor a comparison of three journal articles on the same subject by different authors. It does, however, cover the times of the Sea Raiders, the Saites, the Neo-Babylonians and the Persians; the second two volumes appeared in print about five years ago.

This is, in part, a compulsive review. In the fall of 1979, while taking a required class on "Old Testament History" at a theological seminary in St. Louis (having enrolled in a new M.A. program in Exegetical Theology primarily to concentrate on languages, and having moved from California with that determination) I was drawn into the first volume of this series. I had special-ordered it back in my college days (about 1968) but promptly buried it in my library. So I finally decided to capitalize on the dusty tome, only to find myself playing off the author's position against that of my professor, who was a seasoned and very able scholar of the Old Testament and its surrounding history, and who retired that year.

I at no time verbalized my astonishment at the differences between the author's views and the professors's, but ask questions I did. And I rifled the seminary library to confirm footnotes and check contexts. My professor once issued what seemed to be a stock anathema against the author. But, as I learned later, he himself had never read any of that author's historical works (I, in turn, have never read any of the works except those on history proper).

A week or so before I left Berkeley for Missouri, I happened to notice in a used bookstore an unused book on a sale table; it was the author's second book in the history series. So I added it to my idle collection. A couple of months later I ordered the terminal volume of the series (which had actually been published a year earlier) since the second volume referred to it as already available. By that time I realized the necessity of seeing the system from beginning to end before evaluating it.

I finished reading the first volume and found myself embroiled in the possibilities of the scheme...if it be true. It had served as a time-consuming distraction from my original purpose for returning to school, but I was struck by what a difference of interpretation such a radical departure from the accepted canons of chronology would demand of a student of the Old Testament, and I was caught.

I had to leave seminary for practical reasons after that semester, but I had not been able to shake my convictions about that viewpoint, pending completion of the series. With an opportunity to continue studies this past year, I was grateful to find out about your course through Dr. Paradise. During the second quarter I started the author's second historical volume, finishing it, along with the final volume, this quarter. The comparison of these three works as a unit with Wilson, Roux, journal articles, excavation reports, other books, and especially your class lectures, has been a most valuable exercise. But, having come full circuit in my initial swipe at ancient history, I am still in need of communicating my reflections for a candid appraisal.

Therefore, at the risk of losing all at one toss, and pleading your indulgence for the unwieldy length of this review, and in the face of your own long-delayed and beckoning projects, I would be exceedingly grateful if you would consider this maverick production in lieu of the targeted assignment.

Ages in Chaos, Vol. 1 By Immanuel Velikovsky. Garden City, NY:

Doubleday, 1952. 350 + xxiv pp. (Abbreviated AC)

Ramses II and His Time. By Immanuel Velikovsky. Garden City,

NY: Doubleday, 1978. 270 + xii pp. (Abbreviated R II)

Peoples of the Sea. By Immanuel Velikovsky. Garden City, NY:

Doubleday, 1977. 261 + xviii pp. (Abbreviated PS)

The author of this series studied natural sciences at the University of Edinburgh, history, law and medicine (M.D.) in Moscow, biology in Berlin, the working of the brain in Zurich, and psychoanalysis in Vienna. If these seem dubious qualifications for an ancient historian, they may at least incline us to give him the benefit of the doubt.

I read these three volumes with minute care before reading any of the reviews. I unqualifiedly recommend this approach to any prospective reader. I could find no reviews of these books whatever in the professional journals devoted to such subjects, which was surprise enough. But the reviews pro and con in the popular periodicals contain many outright errors and evident misunderstandings. I dock up some of this to careless reading; it is unworthy of the author's painstaking writing. Some of this is also due to inexpert or unqualified reviewers and adaptation to popular audiences.

Hyam Maccoby, reviewing PS for The Listener (Feb. 24, 1977), and a very favorable writer, states, "Velikovsky's abandonment of the 'Sothic period' theory is the basis of his Revised Chronology...." This is erroneous or at least careless. A mere abandonment of the

Sothic dating could not constitute the basis of anything constructive. As we shall see, the basis of the author's reconstruction is a realignment, by more than half a millennium, of Egypt's Hyksos occupation and its best documented and most glorious dynasty -- the Eighteenth. The intransigent necessity of re-founding both the entire Egyptian chronology and the absolute dating of all civilizations legitimately linked to it by sufficient synchronic indicators, was a mere inescapable consequence of simply recognizing and minutely documenting the myriad correlations which constitute what the author terms the "first abutment" of his reconstruction. The Sothic chronology had to be exposed and perish as a result, therefore, of establishing a more strictly historical foundation for ancient history. But more of this later.

Then there's the strange spectacle ensuing when a "physical sciences editor" assays to write a review of one of the author's history books. Presumably, having been ill-disposed against his theories on other subjects (such extraneous and irrelevant matters filled many of the reviews), that reviewer wished to have a stab at him on this subject. The result seemed most unsatisfactory. Both AC and PS were treated thus unceremoniously by two different science editors (the second book being co-reviewed with a book on a widely different subject). We shall try to limit ourselves to pertinent and useful remarks while extending the same courtesy to other reviewers that we do to Velikovsky -- the benefit of the doubt.

I found the author entirely self-consistent, which itself amounts to almost a miracle considering the complexity of his undertaking and the variety of his evidence. He is not given to

hyperbole, however; exaggeration would have been upstaged by the plethora of "coincidences" on almost every page. To this latter characteristic of the series we shall return, since one reviewer claimed that they were "all of his own creation."

The author states that each of these volumes can be read as a unit, apart from the others. He did not have reviewers in mind when he wrote that! As one of them says, "Velikovsky's opinion to the contrary, it is difficult to make a meaningful assessment when the whole puzzle has not yet been presented and when the displacement of segments is as drastic as this volume suggests." (Jo Ann D. Suleiman, Library Journal, January 15, 1977, p. 199, on PS.) The reviews of AC almost uniformly illustrate the peril of releasing these volumes one at a time, and now, as it turns out, more than a quarter-century apart. And since one or two more are yet to come, even the present collective review is actually premature.

Suleiman found PS "marred by a confused and fragmented presentation and by Velikovsky's difficulty in making neat packages out of myriad loose ends." I did not find it so. The author argues like a lawyer; this is the only unique "method" common to all three books, and he puts it to a pedagogical use. Some reviews seem to have found this trait exasperating; I found it refreshing and illuminating. The author's study of law has found its proper outlet. Reading this series, it is as if a veil were lifted. For generations scholars have been energetically commenting on the cultural remains of obscure ancient peoples, their strange names, languages, art, weaponry, king lists, feats and defeats. At a single stroke their true referents seem unmasked. If the author is right, a grand masquerade is nearing

its end, and vexing difficulties will themselves sink into the obscurity formerly reserved for whole nations. Jubilee is about to be proclaimed for ancient history.

The author states in the Foreword to AC, "Great are the changes in the political history of the ancient East offered in Ages in Chaos. I claim the right to fallibility in details and I eagerly welcome constructive criticism. However, before proclaiming that the entire structure must collapse because an argument can be made against this or that point, the critic should carefully weigh his argument against the whole scheme, complete with all its evidence." Referring to the series, he says in the Introduction to R II, "The centuries both preceding and following the decades described in this volume constitute together, in the reconstruction of ancient history, a monolithic oneness." Thus the risk of judging piecemeal.

But there is nothing bizarre or magical about the author's reconstruction. Indeed, he demythologizes a cartload of speculations and defuses explosive combinations of contradictory evidence by dint of honest labor. As yet, the resulting and opposing schools of thought have not turned on him. They have not noticed; they have not commented...except for W. F. Albright. This would not have been sufficient to make Velikovsky a pariah in the eyes of every school of historical thought however. Caveat lector!

Albright, in his review of AC (New York Herald Tribune Book Reviews, p. 6, April 20, 1952), appeared incredulous, not to say livid, at the effrontery of such meddling within the precincts of ancient studies. But he evidently did not comprehend the end from the beginning. It seemed to me as if that reviewer disdained even to

follow the gist of the author's argument. He must have refused to reorder his mind even for the sake of fair argument; therefore he blinded himself to the burgeoning synchronisms which actually do supply the "vast body of interlocking historical materials" which he attributes to the conventional system. No historical scholar ever again raised his pen either to defend or to denounce the author's reconstruction in any mainline professional journal. Was Albright so fearsome that no respected historian would risk his own reputation to contradict him? I cannot believe it. But historians are busy people, and a review by so eminent and wide-ranging a scholar would understandably swing reading priorities in other directions.

AC was the author's first book, although for some reason it was published second. How different might have been its reception if it had appeared first? We might have seen reviews in JAOS, JNES, BASOR, Orientalia, JNSL, etc. As matters now stand, none have appeared of any in this series. But there may be another and sounder reason: until the whole series is available for inspection it is impossible to render a professional judgment. I prefer to believe that this is the real reason for the general reticence.

The author seemed to have learned from his close encounter with the great dean of Palestinian archaeology. In the later books he has answered the main objections with extended sections on "Bronze and Iron" and "Scarabs and Stratigraphy" (both in R II), as well as repeated treatments of the stratigraphic and typological problems noted at important sites in both PS and R II. What would Albright say if he were alive to read the sequels?

The author's procedure is supremely historical, and he takes a

sharply historical interest in the mixed results of the specialists. Whereas, on the one hand, paleographers, epigraphists, philologists, and linguists are highly language-conscious, and on the other, archaeologists become highly strata- and type-conscious, the author seems to be predominantly event-conscious. For example, he weights mere etymological clues -- when he appeals to them at all -- as of least importance for his argument. What matter most are solid synchronisms of events recorded in annals, in archives, and on monuments of every sort (but with discrimination). Papyri, clay tablets, stone inscriptions, bas reliefs, hollow reliefs, statuary, painted leather hides, tiles, sarcophagi, scarabs, all come under scrutiny, and their translations, often by successive generations of scholars, are surveyed for relevant links.

Albright accused the author of being a lightweight; if so, he is the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back. The author was not the master of many ancient languages; he was a historian (at least in this series). He never lost sight of the forest for the trees, and yet few significant 'trees' managed to escape his observation. He sought the advice of all who were willing, and assembled gains of many generations of scholars. But he had a different agenda from Albright's. The author could never have done Albright's kind of work (as the latter is quick to point out); nor could the latter, for all his towering erudition, ever have solved his own most glaring rationalizations or attempted compromises between long-standing contrary views (e.g., the origin and date of the earliest alphabet -- see R II, Chap. III, "Ahiram's Tomb"). The author never compromises in that fashion; he is not the diplomat. Instead, he reconciled the

enigmas (and, as he is quick to admit) almost accidentally, playfully, while attending to different and only distantly related problems -- like Kekule hitting on the true configuration of the benzene molecule while dozing off before his fireplace. Albright seems to be actually out beyond his own depth for once. The historian may choose his role among the specialists who haggle -- the compromising broker/negotiator, or the peacemaking reconciler.

The author takes no credit for finding any new artifact out in the field, or making any new discovery in linguistic research. He seems to delight in citing all the standard reports and recognized authorities to substantiate a case which none of them even suspected. He has effected a reconciliation between contending teams of specialists and schools of thought to which they themselves remain oblivious; this ignorance is not bliss.

But putting modesty aside, publishers will be publishers. Doubleday sensationalized this series slightly by the write-ups on the dust covers, but not so much that the the actual contents belie the epitomes. Robert H. Pfeiffer, late Chairman of the Department of Semitic Languages and History at Harvard University, said of the first volume,

Dr. Velikovsky discloses immense erudition and extraordinary ingenuity. He writes well and documents all his statements with the original sources.... His conclusions are amazing, unheard of, revolutionary, sensational.... If Dr. Velikovsky is right, this volume is the greatest contribution to the investigation of ancient times ever written.

That seems to be a most candid and ingenuous review statement. But what jealousies such adulatory words must create among humble historians. Such an unhumble paradigm as the author sketches out must evoke a frightful backlash among established schools. Nevertheless, it is proper to delay the heralding of a new dynasty until its claims are sifted and winnowed. Etienne Drioton wrote to the author when AC first appeared,

You certainly overturn -- and with what zest! -- many of our historical assumptions which we have considered established. But you do it with total absence of prejudice and with impartial and complete documentation, all of which is most sympathetic.

Coming from the leading French Egyptologist of the day, and one-time curator of the Louvre Museum, that must carry weight. Is there handwriting on the wall? Dr. David Lorton, research fellow in Egyptology at Johns Hopkins University, wrote about PS, "I can testify that anyone wishing to attack it will have a very difficult job" (dust jacket). In the later two volumes, the author did not retract a word of the earlier one -- perhaps a testimony that he had not rushed into print thoughtlessly. In fact, he seems to have had the entire reconstruction largely complete back in the 1940's. A now rare work of his, called Theses for the Reconstruction of Ancient History, was apparently published in 1945, giving an outline of the entire Ages in Chaos series. But it is now obtainable from only a few libraries; a

limited number are being privately released now by the author's wife.

Having filled out that frame with documentation for the first installment by 1952, the author steels himself for a reaction. Albright complies: he bases himself on "wide reading" and "a completely eclectic use of evidence." The author shows "no appreciation for the rapid progress of scholarly research in the field of ancient history, thanks to archaeology, linguistics and philology; he often quotes an older writer against a current one without recognizing the fact that the former has frequently been superseded by the latter." If this critique means that the author quotes an original excavator against a later theorizer then the accusation is true, but is no critique. The author often had to return to the actual excavators -- several successive ones in fact -- to get to the bottom of the contradictions in current versions of ancient history, and to peer under the shroud of forced harmonizations to see the font of continuing irresolutions. He was problem-sensitive by the time he started sifting the catalogue of repressed, suppressed, and admittedly oppressive conundrums from several related fields.

It is no argument against the author that he either takes statements out of context or that he arrives at "conclusions they themselves would never have drawn," as Albright asserts. This is precisely what must be expected from the necessity of a fundamentally (rather than superficially) non-problematic reconstruction. This practice may be likened to the removal of a still functional vital organ from a deceased person, and its transplantation into a living patient. It is a tribute to the author's discriminating powers that he recognizes the salvagable elements in the presently articulated

body of scholarship, and seeks to graft them into proper relations. This operation is not performed helter-skelter. He is aware of exactly what will be demanded by the astute scholar who will intuitively see, from familiarity with the sources, what must transpire from any attempt to shift the accepted terrain. No scholar may rightfully hold or even claim a corner on evidence. He is free to interpret as he wishes, but it is his duty to allow others to do the same. I personally checked many of the original contexts of what seemed to be decisive quotations or sources. I sensed no malice of intent or twisting of evidence, but the author does choose advisedly among alternative translations, often casting light on problem texts from data "newly available" from authenticated old sources, regarded as widely non-contemporaneous and therefore out of purview. The new evidence seems entirely too tractable for this to be a procrustean exhibition.

The author's use of legendary records of the Jews, Arabs, and Ethiopians in AC doubtless spurred Albright's comment that he used "sources of unequal value" in his collation. This is tantamount to being eclectic in a most undiscerning sense. But as we shall note at length further on, the author is anything but eclectic. And in the above case he uses the only written evidence extant. Would not a historian of pre-Islamic Arabia or pre-Christian Ethiopia or the culture of the ancient Jews (the Bible notwithstanding) have to consider such material, especially in view of the paucity of monumental evidence? Haven't historians used Manetho? Berosus? The classical writers? The inviolability of Manetho's dynastic series is nowhere attested by even his transmitters, Josephus, Africanus,

Eusebius, and Syncellus. Yet his ordering of the ancient world is regarded as axiomatic. Long usage has familiarized generations of historiographers and museologists with his framework. In fact, the author felt compelled to break the stranglehold of Manetho so that the ancient historian could breathe freely. He was constrained by the force of his discoveries to diminish and relativize Manetho's authority to the level of other ancient writers. We should therefore not expect the author to force this traditional literature to bear more weight than it can carry. And he doesn't.

The author appears not to relish the indulgence of mere imagination. His contribution to historical discussion comes with the assistance of ponderous deliberation and painstaking data-gathering. It is somewhat ironic to imply, as reviewers do, that he has exerted his imagination overmuch. For it seems rather to have been the conventional chronology which has forced upon scholars the incubus to seek for imaginative means to talk their way out of trouble. By contrast, the author seems prosaic. Traditional recourses have seemingly inured minds to what is really tenuous, so that a carefully drafted alternative is itself perceived as fanciful. I believe this oddity should be further explored for a moment before we get to the heart of the author's reconstruction.

It is not well-aimed to state that faulty "logic" accounts for either this proposed reconstruction or the conventional construct. It is not logic but order which raises our expectations to anticipate a "next step" in a theoretical explanation or in some sequence from everyday experience. A geographical and temporal arrangement of characters on the stage of ancient history, and the articulation of

transitions within ancient civilization, will raise our hopes of finding certain kinds of links to fill in the empty spots in our knowledge. Once such an ordered arrangement of dynasties and classes of artifacts, etc., becomes assumed, it amounts to an article of faith -- stated with reservations perhaps, but still a working creed. General agreement about such assumptions facilitates speedy communication about other more detailed, workaday matters. And so the assumptions become the skeleton lying below the surface of the entire corpus of scholarly literature on the subject, upon which all the discursive facts are hung. They become the arbiters of routine discoveries, and dispose them to their probable ranks in the scheme of things. Inferences flow from the assumed order of interrelations. Gaps may be bridged.

Logic itself has little sovereignty over the initial choice of an order, but tradition and long usage do play dominant roles. The challenge in my reading of the author's series has been to follow and observe with enough tenacity his new ordering (however arrived at) of well-known historical entities and historiographic complexes. Or to use an extended analogy, the author became a sort of catalytic agent to stimulate the "mitosis" of the chronological scale assumed for ancient history. He caused a split between basically two theretofore unmatched sets of otherwise chronologically integral chains of more-or-less internally sequential events, typological stages, developmental levels, etc. He slid these two chains of events longitudinally with reference to each other until their respective "valences" matched up repeatedly along key, simultaneously well-documented, stretches of time. These sets of synchronisms constitute

the main abutments of the author's bridge to the ancient world; between them he would swing the cables and connect the ligatures of the intervening happenings. But before he arrived at this point, the author was obliged to perform some deft "gene splicing" of Egyptian dynasties which were out of order on one chain, and to correct some duplication and some overlapping which accounted for remaining anomalies.

Generally, with the internal relative dating of a coherent period, dynasty, or even occasionally a whole civilization, the author has no quarrel, insofar as it can be approximately agreed upon in light of normal substantiation. In fact, he depends on this relative dating for his astonishing realignments. It is with the absolute dating of various empires (or "demi-empires," to coin an expression for the partial entities which, if the author is correct, fill pages of history texts without remission), i.e., those which comprise the "high" side or chain, that he takes issue. This necessarily implies that such demi-periods and demi-peoples, in order to be matched up with their true counterparts (appearing always, of course, in the literature and monuments and remains of other civilizations and their undoubted contemporaries which inhere in the complementary chain), must also be compensated for their putative absolute dates relative to that other set of demi-civilizations. So the picture is complicated by what I'll call the distinction between intra-civilizational relative chronology and inter-civilizational relative chronology. This predicament is not made happier by the fact of incomplete, lost, and scattered records, not to mention undeciphered ones. So it could be that many rulers and remnants will still fall between the cracks of

this reconstruction, or get hung up on one side or the other trying to straddle the crack.

The author, thus, leaves the two resultant massifs of demi-histories internally intact as to their relative dating (usually). But with respect to each other he insists on a gargantuan shift. This corrective shift is not entirely equal everywhere along the fault line. But this variation -- over five centuries in some places and almost eight in others -- invariable occurs suddenly and only between dynasties. In other words (to extend the earthquake analogy), additional lateral faults show up between some (by no means all) of the dynasties. All of this is carefully documented and the reasoning seems cogent. The author has merely confirmed what has always been thought possible about the famous dynastic list of Manetho. Necessarily, the Egyptian writer is convicted as a bungler, a prevaricator, or (probably) a little of both. The author of this reconstruction was not, of course, the first to raise the suspicion, but he does shine as a pioneer in capitalizing on the disagreements among respected scholars and the major perennial problem areas in all the relevant historical discussions of the period in question. But these are never his obsessive concern. He, as it were, only surveys sections along the fault line after having noticed from a respectful distance that the fault even exists. But he obviously follows the fault where it leads him when he gets up close. Then he can measure the lateral faults too. Such investigations account for the quarter-century elapsing between AC and the later two volumes. The author prudently decided to delay what had originally been intended as a single volume sequel to be published the following year (1953), so

that he could work out some bugs in the system. He admitted the difficulties involved, but his final success does not seem doubtful nor his claims hollow. He tried to cover every major block of evidence (stratigraphy, typology, prosopography, epigraphy, literary stylistics, philology, etc.) which applied to his several index periods. If the author has left stones unturned, and, naturally, he has, it hardly seems credible to impute some dark motive to the action...or inaction. Exhaustion is the more likely reason. He declares in the Introduction to PS, "The extension of the originally planned Volume II of Ages in Chaos into four volumes, namely The Dark Age of Greece, The Assyrian Conquest, Ramses II and His Time, and Peoples of the Sea, could explain why no book by me appeared between 1961 and 1977. In apology I could draw attention to the new version of the Cambridge Ancient History, which took many years to produce, occupied a great number of scholars, each writing a separate chapter, an undertaking well funded and supplied with editors and secretariat, whereas I worked alone and had to fund my own work in research and writing; and the armada of scholars rewriting the Cambridge Ancient History did not innovate and radically change the history whereas it fell to my task to do exactly this."

The author's successive traversal of the circuit of weaknesses in conventional chronological treatments of archaeological sites and ancient records, leaves the impression of their lack of trans-disciplinary consciousness that the same old problem-pattern has recurred almost without fail at certain (predictable!) levels in site after site around the eastern Mediterranean. "How could recognition of such a state of affairs be forestalled for so long?" any reader

will ask. A mere cataloguing of discrete site reports with their stratigraphic and typological assessments might not reveal the patterned regularity of the problems. Later journal articles might tend to highlight isolated finds or raise second thoughts about initial identifications of details. But without the almost accidental apprehension by someone of a single fundamental error (i.e., a shaky presupposition concerning the chronology of ancient Egypt -- especially of the New Kingdom -- which serves as the standard criterion for comparative dating of surrounding nations), the predictable compounding of the error throughout the reports of key archaeological expeditions, might never have aroused the curiosity and motivation to search for the calculable enigmas. The search begun, however, the verification of the hypothesis cascaded into place. The author has himself harvested and winnowed an abundant crop of singular unresolved antinomies, but they usually turned out to be of one and the same species, and a common variety at that. He does not indict the lawful methods of study employed by any of the specialists devoted to prying up the ancient world for our modern understanding. What he calls for is a new synthesis of the old discoveries under the aegis of the simple recognition that the scepter of Egyptian chronology is a broken reed. Many other persons should then be sought and enlisted to further test the hypothesis and fill in the synoptic history from new excavations and from the rich sources already unearthed but not yet sorted through. The finds already translated and taken up in the scholarly literature will have to be sifted in a new and different light.

Thus, a most significant realization emerges from a minute

study of the author's corpus (even unfinished as it stands so far): his "method" (which amounts to nothing other than an anomaly-sensitive heightening and application of the same synchronic-heuristic principles which served the investigators who first probed the hidden remains of Babylon, Nineveh, Uruk, Nimrud, Assur, Larsa, Ur, Nuzi, Mari, Jericho, Megiddo, Byblos, Knossos, Mycenae, Troy, Boghazkoi, Alalakh, el-Amarna, Ugarit, Ebla...) does not call for junking the labors of the past. Indeed, it is, ironically, precisely because of the oft-surfacing and honest complaints of the great specialists and generalists alike, from diverse lands, tongues and persuasions, that such a synoptic and intensified -- even stereoscopic! -- perspective as may now be possible, can even make headway along past established landmarks, and add its own unique contribution to the heritage of generations. The author of this series was no trifler or dilettante. He did not rush to press with some hare-brained money-maker. His opus, his case, his tone, have the marks of sobriety and equanimity. His suit against the prevailing consensus in ancient history is principial, not a personal vendetta. One should be advised to approach this contest -- this series -- on its own merits, and not to avoid it on the remote doubts of its detractors. It is apparently possible for scholarly minds to become resistant to radical changes, even when they solve chronic defects judiciously and repeatedly, and all as the offspring of but a single basic alteration. Here is exhibited the principle of parsimony with a vengeance. But Occam's razor keeps getting dulled on the fallacy of the beard: how many hairs (synchronisms) does it take to make a beard (solid case)?

Scholars long settled comfortably in their graves are ushered

by proxy into the courtroom to testify in the case of "History versus the historians." The historians were unwitting accomplices in crimes against History. They are exposed, by the author's sleuth-work, as being subordinates merely following orders. Regiments of specialists were busy impaling each other on the horns of dilemmas created by higher echelons of Egyptian chronologists whom they meekly, culpably (?) followed. The intervention of compromising parties to settle the issue, unfaithful to both skeins of lawfully presented evidence, has never been well received.

As the author explains repeatedly throughout the series -- what would soon be obvious to any serious reader even without such mention -- once he had re-synchronized the Egyptian Hyksos period by finding a hitherto unexploited link between Egyptian and Israelite histories, and after he had closed the link between the first pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the first king of the Israelite monarchy, the outcome for the entire period following (nearly two centuries) was ineluctably determined. Neither he nor any other human was capable of altering a single event; if this was a trustworthy lineup of correspondences, no weight of esteemed theory on earth could crush the import of it. Matters were too well documented on both sides to allow a mere fabrication to pass unchecked. The monumental inscriptions of that dynasty alone would be enough to make hash of any artificial and preconceived scheme of inter-cultural connections...if it were not in fact the key to unlock the true identity of otherwise unknown personages, cities, battles, and in fact whole empires -- enabling us to know former mere acquaintances, from tablets to tombs, on a first-name basis.

The whole idea may have come in a flash, but the author deserves credit more for the groundbreaking, plodding, and thankless toil of bothering to play out his hunches (in essence only a single hunch, a single, albeit drastic -- even Copernican -- revolution in historiographic orientation: Does the ancient world revolve around the apotheosized Egyptian sun of Sothis-Menophres-Manetho, an artificial patch-work satellite at best, or must Egypt reappear back among the orbits of its peers and true contemporaries, and out of the dim limelight of a comparative but specious antiquity?). The most pragmatic historian must exclaim about this rearrangement, "It works!" If even half of what the author has correlated is exactly correct, the revolution must succeed, the anchor will hold, the pitons will stick. (See 40 page Supplement to PS, "Astronomy and Chronology.")

Nevertheless, it must be said that the author has but planted a seed. His resynchronizing of major well-substantiated events, reintegrating of split identities, and dovetailing of artistic, technological, architectural, and literary styles (much of it repressed by historians for the sake of harmonious presentations) invites (not to say incites!) even further investigation by competent scholars who will be able to marshal even more of the pieces of the macro-cultural puzzle of ancient history.

Having said all this, I must add a qualifying note for the prospective reader. This series will be disappointing if it is approached as a history of civilization in the ancient Near East. It is not a history. It is, as its predecessor of 1945 required, a more fully documented set of theses on the reconstruction of ancient history. Hence the impression gleaned from numerous newspaper and

magazine reviews, that the work is hard to classify. It belongs to a genre all its own, for the present. It furnishes the legal presumption for a full-blown reconstruction. It does not contain the many-sided results of that reconstruction; it does not displace, but heralds it. This is seed-scholarship -- the sine qua non for the fruits to come. Or, to use the author's image, these books supply the abutments; the whole bridge must follow.

If the author is, in the main, correct, a full-orbed cultural history of the first millennium B.C. should be in the offing, but generations of historians must now carry the task to fruition by a fresh perusal of more than a hundred years worth of excavation reports and legions of journal articles in a dozen modern languages, just to cover the Near East. Overlooked observations and snubbed scholars may have to be reassessed with more gratitude. Concerning the devastating shake-up which may now start to occur (especially after the last intermediate volume or two are published, unless somehow they actually conspire to weaken the phalanx as it stands), since the increasingly active fault line runs through a mighty stretch of recorded history, the author writes in PS,

...this must be clearly understood: we cannot... keep the hinges of world history in their former places. What a slide, what an avalanche must accompany such a disclosure: kingdoms must topple, empires must glide over centuries, descendants and ancestors must change places. And in addition to all this, how many books must become obsolete, how many scholarly pursuits must be restarted, how much inertia must be

overcome? It is not merely an avalanche but a complete overturning of supposedly everlasting massifs. (p. 36)

This resolution may be what many thinkers, teachers, writers, and excavators have been waiting for -- a new way of looking at the same old facts and artifacts. But it will be a hard pill to swallow too. One retrospective conclusion we may draw from this reconstruction if it does stand (and of that, I believe, there can be little doubt, although this generation of scholars may wander and perish in the wilderness before admitting it, if their best source of information remains hearsay and reviews), is that heretofore the learning public must have been taught its ancient history, in a sense, only two-dimensionally. The textbooks, not due to any lack of knowledge, labor, ingenuity, or literary skill on the part of their writers or collaborators, have been like novels poorly written whose characters are ill-defined and viewed from circumscribed perspectives. This reconstruction pours in shading, color, and depth by adding the corroborating but -- what we should expect from the all-too-dutiful minions of the ancient great kings and pharaohs -- often tendentious accounts drawn up by contemporary witnesses from other nations. But this is the fuller perspective attainable by surveying testimony from different viewers of the same event or parts thereof. That a new flock of witnesses seems to have descended out of nowhere, or as if by a time-machine, gives an adventurous air to the undertaking, and even the comedy of the whole affair will finally break some stern looks.

Students of the ancient world who once confront this series of volumes squarely, will, I predict, experience great difficulty

remaining comfortable with their former assumptions. And once exposed to its thrall, their only escape will be to dismantle it; no professional historian will be able to simply walk away from this system unmoved. But to disassemble it, scholars may have to tax their imaginations to force the recognition of differences between the two sides of the author's new equation where there are none -- discrepancies between records he claims are contemporaneous may be sufficiently accounted for by the known selectivity of geographical perspective, political interest, linguistic incommensurables, and ethnic pride on the part of the writers. If the records of Amenhotep II, Thutmose III, Akhnaton, Ramses II, Hattusilis, Shalmaneser III, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, or any other well-known monarch, read like a résumé, it is no worse than we expected; we can still do our history. But without this interplay we are still consigned to conjecture, and that is innocent only so long as all responsible alternatives have been explored and found wanting. But here's one that seems to want finding!

It would be impossible or impracticable to summarize in short order the author's assemblage of evidence. The outcome of his herculean labors may be seen at a glance in the "Synchronical Tables" in R II, and in the "Chronological Charts" of PS. The absence of such helps in AC doubtless accounts for its being difficult reading for scholar and non-scholar alike. It was a most aggravating deficiency of that first volume; it is a discredit to any extended presentation of history, in my estimation, not to satisfy the mental reflex to look for a timeline. Almost as frustrating was the lack of more detailed maps than the ones inside the covers; this was the case with all three

books. But since this series is not, strictly speaking, a formal history, the oversight may be forgiven, and especially in view of the aforementioned handicaps. The well-selected plates add merit to the arguments and, except for the expense, could have been multiplied to good effect. But there comes a point of diminishing returns. The ambitious student could follow up the references to adequate sources on his own. The whole series, when complete, will soon enough provide a challenge and a goad for added hands. Cartographers must be had to redraw maps of ancient nations, and illustrators to reclothe them in their native costumes, and geographers to resurvey their borders. What the author has quarried needs skillful hands to fit and polish. As a sample of what might be done to make the central alignment of events more accessible and assimilable to readers, I will append some lists of synchronisms, identifications, controversies, and evidence culled from the series. A well-appointed diagram here and there might also have aided accurate mental abstraction. However, considering the ease with which a diagram can be misunderstood or misused, especially outside of a classroom context, the author was probably fully justified in avoiding them. The same applies to mere lists (such as I am preparing). They may be spare, but they are decontextualized. Such a "help" may short-circuit proper and proportional argument by pre-empting the mental energy needed to really come to grips with the system.

For a book which could be expected to elicit more than normal cross-referencing, and to stimulate the impulse to check out footnotes, a further word should be said about indexing. The index of the first volume was the most complete of the three in general

references, but there were very few references to modern authors or titles (although there was an admission to that effect at the beginning of the index). By the time PS was published, references to modern authors which appeared in the text were included, but at the expense of important names of ancient persons, cities, battles, etc. I found myself adding lines, and even just extra page references, to the index. R II contained the same flaw about general references, but it did include very extensive entries on the modern sources and authors. This will be most helpful for later passes through the literature. One hopes that the next volume or two will sport even more thorough indexes, or maybe separate the material into two indexes.

It may be well to try and summarize what we have said so far about the author's foundational innovation in this historical reconstruction. To use a homely comparison, it may be likened to trying to button a long, sagging, handmade knit sweater, whose buttonholes are hard to find. My mother taught me, when I was a lad, to start from the bottom where I could see and match up the hem or border of the garment first. But let's say I don't. Then if I'm careless or hurried or don't have my glasses on, I can get things mismatched; if I don't have a mother or a mate or a mirror, I'm a sight! I may go about my business confidently nonetheless, if I think I got the bottom lined up. But it may only mean that some material is doubled over on one side, or stretched out on the other, and that I missed a button or a hole; perhaps a button had fallen off or I had somehow even buttoned out of sequence. Now to s t r e t c h the analogy, let's say this aberrant practice became habitual. Then the

cloth or fabric might become more permanently out of shape. A proper correction of the condition might look and even feel awkward at first. This is the curiosity which seems to have plagued ancient history, if I derive accurately from the author's series. At the end of AC the author writes,

But here, where we expected to reach the solution of the problem of the date of the Exodus in Egyptian history, we were confronted with a problem that made the question of the date of the Exodus shrink into insignificance. Whatever theories have been offered concerning the time of the Exodus, not once has the thought occurred that the Israelites left Egypt on the eve of the arrival of the Hyksos. Consequently we found ourselves faced with a problem of very different magnitude. Either Egyptian history is much too long or biblical history is much too short. Must Egyptian history be shortened by some "ghost" centuries, or biblical history lengthened by the same number of "lost" centuries?

Or again, in the final section of the terminal volume, PS, entitled "Retrospect and Prospect,"

The criticism expressed by workers in ancient history upon the publication of the first volume of Ages in Chaos was directed not against any specific subject but regularly against what appeared to them the impossibility of completing the work of reconstruction. Also those who read carefully the

first part of this work and felt compelled to accept the documented synchronical version of ancient history from the fifteenth to the ninth century inquired, But how could centuries of history be eliminated, or, Which are the ghost years or spurious dynasties?

In the Introduction to that same volume, which proposed the last abutment of his scheme, he makes the confident pronouncement,

On these two abutments now rests the span of ancient history. Conventional ancient history, shown to be misplaced and distorted at both ends, cannot plead for the salvaging of the mid-part intact.

So what now? Shall we trim off a swatch of our ardously knit sweater with some revisionist shears? Never! This is no ostrich-headed approach. He doesn't stick his head in the ground, but he does keep his ear to the ground, listening for the offhand comments of excavators trying to classify their finds. Some of these comments actually slip into site reports, but are summarily rejected as being "early conjectures," too farfetched for serious consideration, or "disproven" by later finds. But such quips, as they mounted up, often showed regularities -- telltale clues which intimated where vacuous centuries have been interposed. Such periods have been mere placebos, not remedies. A "dark age" or a "time of confusion" may be only a projection of the historian. But even without clear vision...the "sweater" just didn't feel right, the scholars would complain now and

then.

The author's solution, of course, demands a rebuttoning of the sweater. That he doesn't bother to unbutton the whole garment first, before he starts buttoning correctly at one point, may be a little disconcerting. In plain terms, he doesn't try to disprove the prevalent supposed synchronisms all up and down the line before systematically offering his own. The reasons for this are pedagogical, it seems to me, and may fall under the rubric of legal "procedure." His disclosure of new evidence seeks to dispose of the old case by simply outweighing it. Besides, to use the other image, he will have to reshape the distorted fabric as he moves along so that he can point out the details: what went wrong, and where? And in addition, by tending to his own business, inch by inch, the author leaves to the reader some of the joy of discovery. The anticipation becomes palpable.

If the author's reconstruction has such explanatory power over existing evidence, we should expect it to have predictive power over some future discoveries. Indeed, he has offered several hypotheses which flow quite naturally from his overarching matrix, and these could serve as guides for further excavations and decipherment attempts. A new itinerary for exploration and a new agenda for research are unsurprising results of this new ordering. For instance, in AC the author suggested that excavations at el-Arish will reveal Avaris, "one of the largest fortresses of antiquity" (p. 89); comparison of the 119 names of Palestinian cities on a victory inscription of Thutmose III, with names of cities in Judah at the time of Rehoboam, will reveal identities (p. 153); a more exhaustive study

of the Karnak reliefs of Thutmose III in light of the lists of temple and priestly furnishings of Solomon in the books of Kings and Chronicles, will conclusively demonstrate their identification (p. 156); "it would be profitable to investigate the Khar of Ras Shamra, proceeding on the basis that it is the Carian language but in other characters, and to decipher Carian inscriptions with the help of the tablets of Ras Shamra" (p. 204); "If one day an Orphic hymn should be found in the dust of Ras Shamra, it would be a lucky day for the excavators but no miracle" (p. 205); "a new attempt should be made to interpret the still unread characters of the Cyprian inscriptions, the linear script of Crete, and the pictorial script of that island, and thus to lift the veil that conceals the past of Crete and of the Minoan culture, the maritime adventures of the Carians in the second millennium, perhaps even the story of Atlantis" (p. 205). In R II we read that hidden under the mound of Tell Nebi-Mend "is not Kadesh but Riblah, the military headquarters of Seti; and of Pharaoh Necho; and shortly thereafter of Nebuchadnezzar" (p. 17). In PS the author records his repeated attempts to have the Eighteenth Dynasty submitted to radiocarbon testing of suitable specimens. In 1963 he finally succeeded in getting the Cairo Museum to release some samples from Tutankhamen's tomb for testing at the University of Pennsylvania. The accepted chronology dates that pharaoh's death at 1350 B.C.; the author maintains about 835 B.C.; and the carbon analysis pointed to 1030 B.C. Dr. Elizabeth K. Ralph of the U. of P. Museum confirmed that such radiocarbon age is "a reflection of the time the rings were formed, not when the tree was felled." One of the three pieces of wood had been the long-lived cedar of Lebanon, which could have skewed

the results. Seven years later the British Museum Laboratory processed reed and seed from the same tomb; the latter showed the age of 899 B.C. and the former of 846 B.C. The author learned this from "a letter by Dr. Edwards, curator of Egyptology in the British Museum, to Dr. Michael of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, dated April 6, 1971." But the British Museum did not publish the results as formerly agreed; there was presumably a suspicion of contamination, although the tomb chamber had remained sealed before discovery in 1922, and no water had leaked in. Since then its objects had been stored in the Cairo Museum. The author writes further,

It would have been important to compare the carbon age of ivory from the tomb of Tutankhamen with the age of ivory from the fort of Shalmaneser III near Nimrud....the two hoards of ivory, considered by me nearly (within two or three decades) contemporary, must yield similar results. It will not surprise me if in the bottom of the huge hoard of objects of art in ivory in the military fort of Shalmaneser one or more originals of the el-Amarna letters could be found.

Not that the work of reconstruction is in need of confirmation from the carbon method -- I feel it is strong enough to serve as a control of the efficiency of the method and not vice versa; but for many occupied in the domains of history and archaeology such corroboration, repeated a number of times, may arouse the desire to investigate my reconstruction, first of all, by reading Ages in Chaos; and possibly this will provide the impetus for the release of many

carbon datings that have never appeared in print because these results diverged by half a millennium or more from accepted dates.

Examples could be multiplied. From the system underlying these three volumes it is possible to interpolate and extrapolate to other events and for new excavations, even predicting what may be found as to approximate styles, materials, national origins, types of names, and languages at particular levels of strata... but sans the anomalies! While reading the first volume several years ago "alongside" a class on ancient Israelite history, I queried the professor about Jericho. It seems nobody knows what became of the city of the time of Joshua. And those old walls which are clearly evident on the site would have made rocky foundations for any rebuilt city in his time! Why were not those very stones reused to build a new wall? Asked what the interval was between the two eras, the professor replied: about 600 years. Asked why the old city could not have been where it "belonged" according to Biblical chronology, he replied: no Mycenaean ware. Between 550 and 600 years is the precise length of the "shear" interval which repeatedly comes up in AC as the shift necessary to resolve the problems of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the Hyksos period into which the fall of Jericho must insert. The author did not dream up this interval; archaeologists cough it up in their shuffle with paleographers and pottery experts to come up with a single date for a level.

But what about that Mycenaean stuff? Two more volumes are yet to appear, The Dark Age of Greece and The Assyrian Conquest (or they

"may be dealt with in a single volume, In the Time of Isaiah and Homer"). But even without them in hand, we know what will have to happen in those unlabelled spaces because the author's reordering or concatenation of the "double helix" lines up a new schedule of events in that era. The so-called "Dark Age" of Greece will have to be shown not to exist at all. This requires that the events prior to it will actually completely replace it, corresponding, thus, with the civilizations well known to be contemporary with it. To be explicit, the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations must be shown to have immediately preceded the Greek period. AC has already placed the Eighteenth Dynasty in this period and there has never been any reason to deny their contemporaneity (except on the grounds of the "anomalous" typological affinity between artifacts of the Mycenaean Period and those of the Greek Age, now shown to have followed immediately, thus dissolving the famous controversy).

Conceivably, the Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations could have been dealt with in AC (i.e., their relevant periods) since Ugarit was also handled there, but the size of that volume didn't apparently permit. Besides, the intriguing matter of Troy and the Homeric epics must also play a large part in that scene. The author writes, "...the histories of Cyprus, Mycenae and Crete, in correlating with one side or the other [of his posited rift between the Israelite and Egyptian chronologies], create confusion in archaeology and chronology." Meanwhile, back at Jericho, Kathleen Kenyon is dolefully concluding seasons of study; it is her duty to announce that the latest moment the flourishing walled city could have existed is in the Middle Bronze period, only a short time after the end of the Middle Kingdom of

Egypt. But this is perfect. For it was the Middle Kingdom that collapsed under the weight of ten plagues and lost her entire army in the midst of the Sea. And Mycenaean ware was nowhere in sight...yet. In forty years the Israelites would be paying Jericho a little visit.

The volume on the Assyrian domination will undoubtedly take an effort equally prodigious to the one on Ramses II and Nebuchadnezzar (the "more proper title" for R II) which immediately follows it in chronological order. R II has demonstrated that the Nineteenth Dynasty is the same as the Twenty-sixth; the Nineteenth records events from the Egyptian point of view while the Twenty-sixth records the same events from the standpoint of the Greek historians who were contemporary. Jeremiah fills in other details. (See my appendices for identifications and synchronisms which the author makes.) The same sort of collapsing together occurs between the Twentieth Dynasty (Egyptian sources) and the Twenty-ninth plus Thirtieth Dynasties (Greek sources). These are the only two sets of dynasties which the author has had to treat in this fashion (the second set in PS). Yet there seems no question but that a similar facelift will have to be performed on Assyrian dynasties as well. And again the elixir of youth will have to be honeyed before scholars will accept it. The author already hints at duplications of personages in AC, during his three-chapter treatment of the el-Amarna letters.

And what of the Kassites? He will likely have found the same predicament with them as he did with the Hurrians, Mitannians, and Hittites: this is either an alternative name (in this case Akkadian) of a people known from the first half of the first millennium, or it is a proto-nomen of a people soon to become more recognizable from

later developments. And there is always the likelihood that this may actually be a people which belongs in the second millennium. The author drops a heavy hint in AC by positing Burraburiash/Burnaburiash (II) as the "alter ego" of a well-known Assyrian king whom he names; he qualifies this identification with "most probably." The forthcoming volume should confirm or disconfirm that with more certainty. He adds, "It is well known from many instances that in Nineveh and in Babylon the king used various names" (p. 321). So it seems likely that he will match what is known about them from their own indubitable remains and veritable references to them by others, with monuments, scripts, languages, names, and events from the first half of the first millennium B.C. He still has some tall explaining to do in order to carry his case to the finish. I haven't detected any granny knots so far, but specialists could help by scrutinizing his splices thus far and publicly reporting their finds.

The author has shown himself willing to countenance variant options at some points of the reconstruction. There were at least two solid potential identifications of Arza/Arsa whose name appears in the hieratic Egyptian text of the Great Papyrus Harris (PS, pp. 17-28). He also regularly includes alternate opinions before closing in on the one with most explanatory power (and which, at times, even helps to explain the multiple variations). Usually where there is more than one possible option, the very existence of a locus of variations attests to a historical kernel of truth among the traditions, which the author tries to distill. In other words, the fact that there are a couple of likely contenders for the identity of Arsa, once his floruit is reduced by the predictable amount, much increases the

circumstantial presumption that the new correspondence of eras is correct. The rash of similar theophorus names coined at identifiable periods, for instance, somewhat complicates the pinpointing of the one right individual for a documented name, but at least this common phenomenon does help us considerably to narrow down the approximate historical provenance. So there are details and there are "details." The author is scrupulous to discriminate between the negotiable and the non-negotiable in his reconstruction. Wilton H. Krogman, an anthropologist who reviewed AC for the Chicago Tribune (April 20, 1952), saw equivocation in the author's calling "minute detail" to his aid while asking his critics to "not cavil at details" (Krogman's words, not the author's). The attentive reader will have little trouble with this juxtaposition. A new paradigm is merely cutting its teeth, and some folks are getting chewed.

A formal history must, for the sake of presentability, "hide" its documentation in endnotes. The author does not do that. This is part of what makes this series incomparable with descriptive histories; it is not specialized archaeology, it is not specialized philology, but it is specialized history, with everything up front. It may not be too early to suggest that the author, all unintentionally, has succeeded in transmuting synchronization into an authentic and distinct method sui generis. But if necessity is the mother of invention, its parturition is probably long overdue. Who can say when the contents of museums and journals finally reached the "critical mass," rendering inevitable the spontaneous fission which this series describes? Perhaps when the "lessons" drawn from the usual histories started seeming unbearably insipid or factitious, the

seam commenced to rupture and its attenuated threads to snap. Minor repairs and patchwork have been attempted, but actually amount to setbacks in principle. The author writes in his Introduction to AC,

Complicated theories would be proposed and discussed, and if accepted, they would establish themselves as new, strong obstacles to a correct perception of past history.

....Because of the disruption of synchronism, many figures on the historical scene are "ghosts" or "halves" and "doubles." Events are often duplicates; many battles are shadows; many speeches are echoes; many treaties are copies; even some empires are phantoms.

....Through the laborious efforts of scholars, achievements have been recorded without knowledge of their real nature.

As for his own attempt, he writes in the same place,

When the hinges of world history are lifted to an adequate height, facts about peoples and countries, their art and religion, their battles and treatises [sic] pour down as if out of a horn of plenty. Certainly more than one fact and more than one parallel must have been overlooked in this book, but this is a shortcoming from which a pioneer work is seldom free.

It may be instructive here to examine some of the stitches

which have not held. I'll limit my illustrations, for the sake of brevity, to probably the most famous: those used to tie together Biblical history with its assumed surroundings. Some of these alternatives are mutually exclusive even by conventional standards of chronology.

1. The Poem of Keret. This epic poem, found at Ras Shamra, and containing some historical content, has been thought by some to refer to the patriarchal migrations and wars of Abraham's time; the name "Terah" appears (the name of Abraham's father), and also the names "Asher" and "Zebulun" (the names of two of Jacob's sons and, later, tribes), according to the French translator, Virolleaud. But nonconformities are too numerous. Instead, the author of this series locates the evidence to place this Phoenecian poem in the early Empire period of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt and, in turn, contemporaneous with the events of II Chronicles 14-16. (AC, pp. 205-219)

2. Hatshepsut. This justly famous woman pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty has been sometimes conjectured as the benefactrix of Moses who brought him up as her own son. Instead, it is argued, she was a contemporary of the last king of the Israelite Monarchy. (AC, chap. III)

3. Akhnaton/Amenhotep IV. This vaunted "monotheist" of the Eighteenth Dynasty, best known from the remains of Akhet-Aton (modern El-Amarna) and the el-Amarna Letters, has been touted as the mentor of Moses, who supposedly elaborated his idea and foisted it on the Israelite tribes in the wilderness. Instead, he is shown to be a resident of the mid ninth century and coeval with the early Divided

Kingdom of Israel. (AC, chaps. VI-VIII)

4. The Habiru. This term from the el-Amarna correspondence has been presumed to be a name for the Hebrews, having left Egypt under Moses, now invading the land of Palestine under Joshua. Other theories link up the word with the Apiru -- workers in the Egyptian mines on the Sinai Peninsula -- or the Afiru from a region in Babylonia. Instead, they are identified as being marauding bands from Trans-Jordan/Moab in the ninth century, wreaking devastation on the Northern Kingdom of Israel, particularly its capital. (AC, pp. 268-281)

5. The "Israel" Stele of Merneptah. This monument has been regarded as containing the earliest reference to Israel in any Egyptian document; the historical context has been supposed to be the Exodus with Pharaoh Merneptah on the chase, since he boasts, "Israel is desolated, his seed is not." Instead, the stone records events which took place during the seventies of the sixth century, and for which we have an independent reckoning by Jeremiah in his prophecy and lamentations; Greek sources reveal much about his Libyan campaign soon thereafter. (R II, pp. 189-202)

6. Sheshonk/Shoshenk/Sosenk (I). This pharaoh, presumably founder of the first of two Libyan dynasties -- the Twenty-second -- is ostensibly Shishak, who sat on the Egyptian throne during the transition from the Israelite Monarchy to the Divided Kingdom. Instead, he is identified with Pharaoh So, to whom the last tergiversating king of the Northern Kingdom sent tribute during the much later Assyrian ascendancy. In sequence he is IV (last), not I (first). (AC, pp. 174-176; and at length in the volume on the

Assyrian domination.)

7. Nekau-Wehemibre (Wahibpre). This most obscure pharaoh, mentioned only in the Serapeum stele, is professedly the great Pharaoh Necho who battled Nebuchadnezzar, and who slew Josiah at Megiddo, and who is well-known from Greek sources. Instead, he is virtually an unknown with nothing of historical worth attributable to him; scholars were clutching at straws here. (R II, pp. 1-7)

8. Ramses II. This pharaoh has been immortalized in celluloid by Yul Brynner. What are the chances of according him a different slot in history by a more rigorous synchronization than that which makes him the pharaoh of the oppression/Exodus? For historians of Biblical history, a relinquishing of the facile connection between the store-city named "Ramses" and the pharaoh of the same name will not come easy. However, an affirmation by a monument, now in the Museum of Ismailia, of the name of the pharaoh -- Thom or Thoum (Tutimaeus or Timaios in Greek) -- who met his end in a way unmistakably reminiscent of the Exodus account, should help make up the loss; the name of the other store-city was Pi-Thom ("abode of Thom"). The god, Ra, was mentioned in the text along with king Thoum. The author offers several explanations for the name of the store-city, Ramses: Ramses of the Nineteenth Dynasty may have had some predecessors of the same name in pre-Hyksos dynasties; it could be a city named after a divinity; the Biblical name "Ramses" (Ex. 12:37) could be a later name of the place. The question is still open; it seems peremptory to foreclose these options. Instead of the dauntless, undying anti-hero of DeMille and many historians -- never mind the mummy -- Ramses II turns out to be cast in the famous role of antagonist to the most

renown of all Chaldean monarchs of Babylon (who, in turn, doubles as the greatest of all so-called "Hittite" rulers). So an era is exchanged -- the Exodus for the Exile. (R II, chaps. I-II, IV-VII)

Many Old Testament scholars will have difficulties with the author's reassignment because they have invested so many words in defending one or another of the several theories which prevail as to the date of the Exodus. Another author, Donovan Courville, has addressed this matter most thoroughly and ably (and, happily, with cognizance of this author's historical writings up to that time) in his two volume The Exodus Problem, 1972.

The historical-critical scholars of biblical literature necessarily come under the lash too. Although the author does not draw out at great length the ramifications of his reconstruction for theological scholars, his three page treatment, "Bible Criticism and the Documents of Ras Shamra" (AC, pp. 194-196), carries enough potency to spawn a library of books. If he is right, the "higher critics" suffer a major setback from which there can be no recovery. Their glee at averring the supposed unhistorical character of the Bible, is turned to gloom at the sight of their nemesis. What wrath is like that of the Bible critic who has been played the fool? Were Sayce, Kyle, Naville, or even Garstang alive today, however, they too would have to repent. The apologists for the Bible are no more liable to infallibility than its derogators. But they shall have to recant of different things. In the above section, the author recounts the sudden conversion of critical scholars from the Scylla of an exilic Babylonian or Hellenistic origin for much of the Old Testament, to the Charybdis of a "cultured" Canaanite derivation for it; the discovery

of Ugarit in 1928-9 was the watershed. Both are radically wrong...if the author is right. Will it ever be possible to get the better of the historical-critical devotee? For those who care about such matters, the answer will have to be found in getting a new and superior grip on the hilt of history itself in order to discomfit their representations. Their mythopoeic "method" can now be shown up for what it is. They deserve a hand for originality of costume, but the party's over.

A caveat must be issued respecting objections against the author's framework drawn from historical linguistics and comparative philology. These sciences themselves have a chronological taproot. If that root is cut, many arguments must necessarily topple. Again, such a conclusion is not arbitrary; it follows ineradicably from the debacle of traditional chronology. It is an involuntary reflex of the reconstruction. Thus, for instance, Dahood's case for a "Canaanitic" origin of Israel's literature and religion becomes untenable insofar as he maintains it upon the grounds that Ugaritic literature precedes the bulk of Biblical literature prior to the ninth century B.C. Comparative Semitic philology must feel a heavy, but temporary, blow if the author is correct. The hesitation, then, of many Biblical commentators to accept Dahood's allegations (not to mention Cyrus Gordon's), will not have been ill-founded.

The matter of the spelling of "Pereset" with a "t" ending may have to be handled under the same caveat. There is evidence that the Ptolemaic orthography for "Persians" was Peresett (see PS, pp. 29-35). One would like to see even more parallels of an exact nature here, but after all, the author places the documents of Ramses III some 140

years before the Canopus Decree in which the "t" ending was customarily added to geographical designations (to feminize them). In the case of Persia, it is added to a word which has one "t" already. This observation might suggest that the spelling in the inscriptions of Ramses III at Medinet Habu represents a transition period. This is all to say that the author's scheme, based as it is on multiple, even numerically unprecedented, historical synchronisms, cannot be jeopardized by unreconstructed historical linguistics affecting this period. The very attempt would amount to a petitio principii. But groundbreaking with the new tool has yet to be done in a full-fledged way in this field.

If Cyrus Gordon ever gave the author of this series any "support," as a reviewer boasted (Hyam Maccoby, The Listener, Feb. 24, 1977, pp. 252-3), it is not evident from their contents. He is mentioned in the Acknowledgments of AC as having kindly answered a number of questions in his field, put to him -- virtually anonymously it seems -- by the author. This was simply his usual recourse when addressing other scholars who could by no means be expected to endorse his views. The same services were rendered -- without any personal commitment and sometimes without knowledge of the thesis of the work -- by Walter Federn, Robert H. Pfeiffer, I. J. Gelb, and S. I. Feigin. In only one paragraph of text (R II, pp. 168-9), Gordon is cited in support of the suggestion that Ur in southern Mesopotamia may not have been Abraham's birthplace but, rather, one northwest of Babylonia: Ur of the Chaldees (to distinguish the two). But Gordon himself would necessarily have spurned this reconstruction vigorously if he wished to maintain his own position. The assertion of any mutual

accommodation appears conjectural.

But the author was right to admit fallibility. He alleges contradictions or corruptions in the Biblical text where there are none (such as between Jeremiah 7:22 and Exodus 12:43-13:16 in the light of Amos 5:22-25; AC, p. 34). His whole section entitled, "Ahab or Jehoram: Two Versions of the Scriptures" (AC, pp. 255-262), is problematic. This entire imbroglio had been handled fully and adequately by Martin Anstey as early as 1913 (Chronology of the Old Testament, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1973) and by Edwin R. Thiele more recently (The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings: A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982 (1965, 1952)). Unfortunately, the first edition of Thiele's book appeared the same year as AC, so the author could not have benefited from that much hailed treatment; he has referred to it in the subsequent volume, R II. The section entitled, "Ezra" (PS, pp. 149-152), containing much of value, might be compared with Anstey's work, above. The author has, regrettably, not addressed in print the difficulties of documenting the length of the Persian Empire. This deserves further attention, it seems to me, from the viewpoint of his reconstruction.

Notwithstanding these reservations, or others which might be noted depending on the reader, the accomplishment as a whole cannot be pushed aside. The author's reconstruction must eventually cause repercussions throughout the entirety of ancient historiography. For such a reordering of placement among mighty civilizations necessarily alters the formerly expected tempo of cultural development. A reordering on the scale proposed in this series demands a different

proportionality for developmental intervals and the "density" of undated events. Ratios so altered in a downward direction must unquestionably reduce the interpolation and extrapolation intervals which are indispensable to especially prehistoric reckoning, for spacing undated events, and piecing together the fabric of ancient civilization.

Consequently, as a corollary of the arithmetic reduction of the absolute dating of one of the two gigantic "continents" of known events postulated by these volumes, must come a geometric telescoping of the relative dating among earlier events where written records have not been much help in fixing the exact intervals. Thus, even our intelligent guesswork would change character by the introduction of this new intelligence. How rapidly those cultures might have changed becomes an open question (again?). So even though this question does not come up -- is not raised -- in this reconstruction, it is certainly implicated in the tectonic shift which is delineated; proto-historic magnitude of spacing (such as between destruction levels in strata of mounds) should experience some quantum leap downward.

The outlook is different then. If the civilization of the Egyptian New Kingdom, Late Minoans, Late Mycenaean, Troy, Cyprus, Ugarit, Mitanni (Early Medes), "Neo-Hittites" (Early Chaldeans), Hurrians (Early Carians), Assyrians, Elamites, "Kassites," Syrians, Phoenicians, and Israel/Judah from Saul to the Captivity, all actually fit (though not necessarily "harmoniously"!) into the first half of the first millennium B.C. (the true "Hittites" -- Chaldeans -- coming in the last century of that period, with the Sea Peoples and Pereset and the Twentieth Dynasty coming later, in the Persian period), then

what a different scene faces us in the second millennium and the latter part of the third! The Hyksos must fill most of the latter half of the second millennium in Egypt (and probably, with the Philistines, ruling up the coast and into Syria to the Euphrates); the Middle Mycenaean and Middle Minoan III periods would be flourishing then; the great cities of Sumer, Akkad, and Assyria would still be asserting themselves with vigor; the Israelite wandering in the desert, conquest of Canaan and the Amorites, and occupation under the Judges, would be busying the descendants of Jacob. Jericho would have been levelled in the fifteenth century.

The first half of the second millennium would then have to hold the Middle Kingdom, First Intermediate Period, and part of the Old Kingdom in Egypt. Accordingly, it would also include Middle Mycenaean and Middle Minoan I and II as well as some of their Early periods respectively. The Amorites and numerous smaller tribes would be in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, while Abraham and the later patriarchs would be sojourning between Syria and Egypt, their descendants actually dwelling in Egypt for over two hundred years until Moses led them out near the end of the sixteenth century. Due to the author's considerable lengthening of the Hyksos (Amalekite) period in Egypt, the chronological chasm between Egypt and its conventionally assumed contemporaries must close by a couple of centuries at least. We must still expect to find the Old Babylonian Empire and Hammurabi there however, though probably closer to the middle of the millennium (his spectacular descent down the centuries would continue a while longer in that case). And from the earlier stated premise on extrapolation we might expect the entire flower of

Sumerian civilization to be contained in the second half of the third millennium along with the start of the Old Kingdom in Egypt. Ancient recorded history has folded up like an accordion.

Once upon a time, the author of this series caused "old friends" and even supposed "families" to part company, and be transported across the borders of many centuries, and be repatriated back where they originated, compatible with their own eras, where they will live happily ever after. But he, poor fellow, is left with the chore of sorting out all the emigration papers and records. "Evan? Ivan? Ivor? Iverson? Oivay!" Ever after, it must be considered "uncritical history" not to ask the questions, Who was writing? In what language? In what script? Where was it found? Where was it written? At what strata level was it?, before asking more personal questions about content. Since we actually know now who had been deported, and where, we must not assume their former residences to be their native air. The exiles have returned to their indigenous surroundings and deserve to be regarded as citizens; they have been legitimately naturalized. We ought to start assuming this truth in our dealings with them, and not impolitely question their right to belong. If what the author has done is "legal." And he has tried not to antagonize the jury or judges.

It cannot be said that the author "divided and conquered"; scholars were already sadly divided. He has toiled to rejoin what had been put asunder long before the modern study of antiquity, in fact, even before the Christian era commenced. The honesty of many scholars, true to their methods, has made possible this start of a monumental reconstruction of ancient history. The truth will out,

even when it seems to be dashing our dearest hopes. The self-effacing rigor of scholars such as Kenyon will decide the firmness of this case; they constitute, by their doubts as well as by their certainties, a strong fifth column of unsolicited testimonials. The author had, by the nature of the case, to depend on respected predecessors to do much of the work for him; his craft sails under their steam, and he is grateful. He was evidently not qualified to do everything. Had he personally been a master of cuneiform, hieroglyphics, and decipherment generally, he could presumably have answered questions which he raises but leaves to others. He has run a treacherous gamut and survived, not entirely unscathed; that he now champions the cause which others unmethodically inaugurated, is his due. The gauntlet is down.

It is to be feared that if the author is incorrect in his fundamental readjustment, the absence of any thorough critique of the series as a whole by a qualified and respected historian (the mere specialist will never accede to the chronological emendation without the lead of a comprehensive historian whose province it properly is), will cause it to gain ground among serious students who naturally gravitate toward some consummate relief from the internal fatigue within the elongated and topheavy chronology they have inherited. This delay can only adversely affect communication and professional integrity in their eyes.

The greatest pleasure will be derived from this series by the person who has himself measured his wits against the challenge of the full length of recorded ancient history in its scholarly substrata, and can actually handle the ancient sources in their original

languages. Very few scholars are qualified single-handedly to assess this whole scheme, or are possessed of the equanimity to remain unruffled by such a staggering re-collation of the usual evidence, but without the usual warrants, antinomies, or outcome. The dominant educational system in our nation holds dim prospects of nurturing such encyclopedic adepts, such "Renaissance" persons, with interests broad enough and abilities developed enough to encompass such a needed criticism. This system of rescaled chronology may have the logical symmetry and tensile strength to ramify fruitful hypotheses indefinitely; it may come into its own as a mature tool of the trade. But it yet wants a past master, a denizen of the grand tradition in historiography, one who has nothing to lose or fear from the venture, to rise to the occasion and either lay this portentous challenger finally to rest with a few deft strokes (awkward bludgeoning abounds), or at least pay him their respects by just one truly creditable and comprehensive review, whatever the results.

Immanuel Velikovsky died on November 17, 1979; he was 84.