When the Center Cannot Hold: A Paradigm for Reading Near Eastern Archaeology
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Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold . . . .

William Butler Yeats

Abstract
The thesis of this essay is that a review of the current status of Near Eastern archaeology reveals the necessity for a heuristic paradigm of diverse perspectives in order to read and understand the complex views which run the gamut from ultra-conservative to revisionist with each holding distinctive archaeological views, unique approaches and methods of interpretation. A cursory review of the history of the archaeology of Israel over the last fifty years shows that the discipline is not monolithic; the discipline has splintered into three separate wings with serious tensions between the camps and with each having its own set of presuppositions and unique conclusions. More than approaches; the camps reflect states of mind and differing world views.

Narratives about the archaeology of Israel can be found in many popular news venues with stories written with varying degrees of sophistication and often with the bias of one's readership in view. In order to read and come to terms with such a complex landscape of ideas and worldviews, the reader needs a diverse paradigm that is broadly inclusive of current approaches in the United States, Scandinavia, Europe, and Israel where biblical archaeology is tied to a non-religious or national quest for history and identity. The archaeology of Israel has been politicized and drawn into the politics of the region. Negotiating such a landscape of ideas is fraught with many pitfalls and dangers. Essentially the center has failed to hold. Though there is a new center or centrist perspective, it too has its own continuum, and continues to be assaulted by proponents from both the left and the right. Only with a detailed and inclusive map, or paradigm of ideas, can one negotiate this complex and dangerous, scholarly terrain.

Introduction
"Things fall apart; the center cannot hold. . . ." This line, from the 1921 poem by William Butler Yeats "The Second Coming," may be an apt metaphor for the history of Near Eastern archaeology during the past fifty years. The thesis of this essay is that a review of the current status of Near Eastern archaeology reveals the necessity for a heuristic paradigm of diverse perspectives in order to read and understand the complex views which run the gamut from ultra-conservative to revisionist with each holding distinctive archaeological views, unique

approaches and methods of interpretation.[1] When the center cannot hold, the encompassing myths also fail to carry an abiding majority.

The Golden Years: The Albright/Alt Consensus

Until the nineteenth century few scholars questioned the historicity of biblical narratives and it was only in the sixties and seventies of the next century that serious consideration was given to the nature of archaeological interpretation.[2] Beginning in the middle of the 19th century, however, many scholars began to read the texts of the patriarchs, exodus, and conquest as saga, legend, and etiology.[3] Thus the problematics surrounding the archaeology and history of ancient Israel gave rise over the next one hundred and fifty years to an array of viewpoints with many questioning the historicity of the Bible. One of the most influential schools of thought appeared in the United States in the middle of the twentieth century. The Baltimore School, as it was dubbed by its founder W.F. Albright, was in marked contrast and in direct opposition to the evolutionary tendencies of the nineteenth century views of Wellhausen.[4] As one of the few real giants in American biblical scholarship, Albright, along with his students, dominated the

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[1]This current situation seems to follow a general movement in culture from innocence to cynicism, debate, and fragmentation. See for example John L. Espositio, et al, World Religions Today (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 26; and Huston Smith in Jeffery Paine, ed., The Huston Smith Reader (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012) 58-67. See also Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 4-7. For comment on the changing view of perceived reality in American culture in the second half of the 20th century, see Jane Leavy, The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle and the End of America's Childhood (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010) xxiii. The dates implied by Leavy are 1951 to 1995–the period of Mantle's public life.

[2]Edgar Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) 22-30. Krentz shows that the 19th century embodied an intellectual and social revolution that set the historical method free. The historical method became "the" method for interpretation. Biblical books became historical sources to be studied like other ancient documents. See also Shlomo Bunimovitz, "How Mute Stones Speak: Interpreting What We Dig Up,"Biblical Archaeolgy Review 21 # 2:59.

[3]The early historical quest culminated in the famous work of Julius Wellhausen originally published as History of Israel (1878); later versions appeared as Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel. Wellhausen argued, for example, that the patriarchal materials did not reflect an early or authentic period of Israel's ancestors but the later times of the writer.

[4]See especially the introductory essay in Walter Brueggemann, The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions, 2nd ed., (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 21. Brueggemann notes that "Albright's primary interest was in philosophy of history, and a great deal of his effort went to demolish an evolutionary view of the progressive development of religion in the Bible. . . associated with Wellhausen." See also Peter Douglas Feinman, William Foxwell Albright and the Origins of Biblical Archaeology (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2004). Feinman seeks to put Albright in the context of American intellectual and social history.

field of biblical history and interpretation in America from about 1940-1970. As a teacher Albright inspired intense devotion and loyalty from his students. His approach, known as "biblical archaeology," became a common ally with the Biblical Theology movement. This movement developed a widely held consensus demonstrating how history and theology could work together to form an appealing apologetic for widely held biblical views.[5] The leaders of this movement hoped that archaeology would prove the Bible to be historically true. Albright himself taught that archaeology would confirm and clarify the "essential historicity" of the biblical traditions. Albright's pupil, G. Ernest Wright, wrote that history was the primary datum for judging faith.[6] That is, theology depended upon the historicity of the central events of the biblical narrative–events like the call of Abraham, the Exodus, and the Conquest.[7]

Based on the old poetic content in the Mosaic tradition, Albright argued for the "essential historicity" of the core narratives. He thought that a number of poetic verses found in Exodus and Numbers indicated the antiquity of the prose narratives in which they were embedded. Based on comparative studies with the Ugaritic epics and hymns, the poetic materials could be placed in context. For example, this type of study allows Albright to argue that the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15 is Israel's earliest preserved poem.[8]

Even though Albright's views were often "nuanced" and took note of discrepancies at cities like Jericho and Ai, the over-all tenor of his theory was conservative and maximalist with regard to biblical traditions. As the discipline of biblical archaeology developed, scholars attempted to correlate the discoveries from the field with a reading of the text. Though Albright and his students hoped by this process to establish the "essential historicity" of the biblical text, continued excavation actually seemed to bring a decline in the confidence of the Bible as a historical record. Questions were asked about the historical nature of the exodus from Egypt which played such a central and crucial role in the biblical text. Yet there was no evidence of such an event in the historical record. Questions were also asked about the Late Bronze age cities of Jericho, Ai, and Gibeon so central to Joshua's portrayal of the conquest and to Albright's reconstruction. There was, ironically, little or no evidence of Late Bronze occupation at these sites. Furthermore, if as in Albright's view the early Israelites were a group

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[5]Brevard S. Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis (Philadelphia: Wesminster Press, 1970) 17-50.

[6]G. Ernest Wright, God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital (London: SCM Press, 1952) 12-13.

[7]William G. Dever, "Biblical Archaeology," in Eric M. Meyers, ed., The Oxford Encyclopedia Of Archaeology In The Near East, volume 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 316.

[8]W.F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths (Garden City, New York: 1968) 42-52.

of outsiders from the desert, why was there evidence for cultural continuity between the Israelites and the Late Bronze Age culture of Canaan?[9]

Eventually scholars came to see the Albright-Wright theory of the conquest as essentially a form of biblical description, perhaps in part because Albright's work tended to embody what John Hayes called "tradition fundamentalism." [10] Therefore, once the details of the text were undermined as in the case of Jericho and Ai, then the theory itself could be set aside. [11] Albright left himself open for this form of critique because, as Miller puts it, he had a tendency to "over-interpret archaeological data and to exaggerate the relevance of archaeology for confirming and clarifying . . . the biblical traditions." Put differently, "much of what Albright claimed as archaeological evidence confirming or clarifying biblical history was not that at all, but rather hypothetical constructs which he himself produced by playing biblical and archaeological evidence off against each other."[12]

In retrospect, many scholars now see that Albright's work along with that of his disciples was rooted in the American religious life of the late 19th and 20th centuries. The agenda was, therefore, more theological than archaeological. Albright hoped to substantiate the Bible to offset the damage that he thought was done by German "higher criticism." Hence Albright and his followers sought to demonstrate the historical nature of the Patriarchal and Conquest narratives and to show the uniqueness of Israel's religious life. This effort seems now to have

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[9]Paula McNutt, Reconstructing The Society of Ancient Israel (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1999) 53.

[10]James K. Hoffmeier, Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 33; John Hayes, "Review of A History of Israel, 2nd ed., by John Bright, JBL 93: 448-49. While Albright understood that a text could be full of inaccurate information, he also wanted to maintain that the tradition was grounded in history. This allowed him to suggest hypothetical solutions like the case of Bethel/Ai.

[11]The demise of the Albright school came about in part due to the case made against this original version of "biblical archaeology." Two important critiques of Albright and his school were Thomas L. Thompson, The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives (New York: De Gruyter, 1974); and John van Seters, Abraham in History and Tradition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press). A second aspect of the decline of this view has to do with the archaeological data. Finkelstein writes that "the archaeological evidence presently available deals a fatal blow to the theory of a unified military conquest advocated by Albright and his followers. More and more sites that can be identified unequivocally with those mentioned in the biblical conquest narratives lack any remains of the Late Bronze period." See Israel Finkelstein, The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988) 352.

[12]J. Maxwell Miller, "W. F. Albright and Historical Reconstruction" Biblical Archaeologist 42 # 1: 42-43.

been doomed to failure because of a naive and uncritical interpretative strategy that was essentially circular in nature.[13]

For almost fifty years however, Albright and his disciples were engaged with Albrecht Alt and his students in an intense debate over the issues with each school occupying polar positions within a larger consensus.[14] Whereas Albright began with his philosophy of the essential historicity of the biblical text and attempted to correlate archaeological data with the Joshua narrative in developing his model of the conquest, Albrecht Alt developed his peaceful settlement model by applying a nuanced reading of Joshua and Judges along with a careful analysis of Egyptian historical sources.[15] In his important essay published in German in 1925, "The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine," Alt argues that Israel settled peacefully in the mountains of Palestine because this was the region which had been affected the least by the city-state system. These regions were not well organized politically and were not heavily populated. Consequently, this part of the country offered the best opportunity for Israel to

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[13]See Shlomo Bunimovitz, "How Mute Stones Speak: Interpreting What We Dig Up," Biblical Archaeology Review 21 #2: 61-63. Though much of Albright's work has been swept aside by new theories, his place as the dominant figure in the golden age of Near Eastern archaeology is secure. He helped to revolutionize the archaeology of the Levant in the early 20th century by bringing structure, and coherence to the discipline through refinements in stratigraphy, pottery typology, and historical chronology.

[14]In retrospect, it is clear that the Albright and Alt schools (or the American and German schools) had much in common and that the intense debates between them were actually "in house" or part of a larger consensus. Both the American and German schools agreed on the general date or time frame of the conquest or settlement and both thought that "Israel" came into the land from east of the Jordan River. The controversial aspects of the scholarly dialogue between the two schools date to the 1950s and were precipitated by the development of the "Biblical Theology" movement, especially different theological assumptions, and the divergent application of the results of literary, form-critical, and traditio-historical analyses. The differences in the two schools can be seen in the histories produced by each group, especially the works done by Bright, and Noth. Yet in spite of the rhetoric, the American school continued its admiration for the conservative continental tradition represented by figures like Rudolf Kittel. John Bright's portrayal of the period of the Judges essentially follows Noth's amphictyonic model. A close reading of Bright's history also demonstrates that he, like the German school, admits that the origins of ancient Israel were extremely complex. See Niels Peter Lemche, The Israelites in History and Tradition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 142-143; and William G. Dever, "The Patriarchal Traditions," in John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller, eds., Israelite and Judean History (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977) 76-77.

[15]Feinman argues that Albright's view of Israel was deeply influenced by his experience of religion in the Methodist Church of his youth. See Feinman, William Foxwell Albright and the Origins of Biblical Archaeology, 109. See also Joseph A. Callaway; rev. by J. Maxwell Miller, "The Settlement in Canaan: The Period of the Judges," in Hershel Shanks, ed., Ancient Israel:A Short History from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1988; revised ed.,1999)71.

settle down and move away from their semi-nomadic ways to an agricultural economy. The process, Alt thought, occurred gradually. The semi-nomads came following their sheep from the area east of the Jordan River into the mountains of the Central Hill country. They gradually penetrated further and further into the western mountains and eventually began to build villages[16]

Martin Noth, Alt's student, developed the theory further and gave more detail to the scenario. His view was that as the semi-nomads settled down they in time developed along tribal lines with various tribes settling in different parts of the hill country. In due course, the various tribes formed an alliance which eventually expanded to a twelve tribe confederacy. Yahweh was the God of that confederacy and the central symbol was the ark of the covenant. Yet, for Noth, the tribal confederation of Israel came into existence only after the semi-nomads had come into the land from beyond the Jordan.[17]

For Alt and Martin Noth the question of military encounters came only in a second stage of Israelite settlement which was late in the period of the Judges. The first stage of occupation was a gradual settlement. The military campaign presented in the narrative of Joshua 2-9 was "aetiological saga"–told in order to give legitimacy to the Israelite claim of ownership to the land.[18] The military encounters came later as a period of territorial expansion.

In summary, for Alt and Noth, the Israelites were semi-nomads who over time settled in the sparsely populated regions of the central mountains. Not all of the tribes settled at the same time. The tribe of Dan was an example of later movement and settlement. An analysis of Joshua 1-12 indicates that originally the stories did not deal with all Israel, but that the nucleus of the traditions was the Benjamite material. This tradition was later expanded to include all Israel. On the positive side, Alt's view came closer to predicting later results than did Albright's. Yet the major weaknesses of the Alt-Noth position were that it depended too heavily on the sociological theories of Max Weber and drew too sharp a distinction between villagers and nomads, and allowed Alt to draw too close of an analogy between ancient Israel and modern

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[16]Albrecht Alt, Essays On Old Testament History and Religion (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966) 168.

[17]See especially Martin Noth, The History of Israel (New York: Harper & Row, 1958, 1960) 53 ff.

[18]See Manfred Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes (Naperville, Ill: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1971) 20-25. The portrayal by Alt and Noth came under a thorough critique by Albright and his school from early days. In a 1939 article, Albright wrote that Alt and Noth make form criticism carry more than its just historical weight. It is likely that Albright saw the work of Alt and Noth as an extension of the German school of Wellhausen which he associated with a struggle between the forces of light and darkness. See Feinman, William Foxwell Albright, 66.

Bedouins; and there was an overemphasis on the model of an amphictyony without historical or archaeological evidence.[19]

The Loss of Consensus: The Mendenhall/Gottwald Revolt

The fact that the views of Albright and Alt could be so different while working with the same source material is for George Mendenhall "the best indication of unfinished scholarly business." With that beginning Mendenhall, a student of Albright, announced in a seminal essay in 1962 the need for a re-examination of the issues of the conquest or settlement. He began that essay with the statement that "There is no problem of biblical history more difficult than that of reconstructing the historical process by which the twelve tribes of ancient Israel became established in Palestine and northern Transjordan." In this important essay, Mendenhall found three major pre-suppositions which both Albright and Alt held in common: that the tribes entered Canaan from some other area; that the tribes were nomads or semi-nomads who took land and settled down; and that tribal solidarity was ethnic in nature, kinship being the element of contrast between Israelite and Canaanite. The effect of his work was to reveal that the consensus was surprisingly broad and actually was an Albright/Alt consensus.[20] Yet Mendenhall's innovation would effectively close this foundational era and inaugurate a new one.

Mendenhall begins his critique with the assessment of early Israel as a nomadic group. This idea, he argues, is a false assumption that is affirmed by neither the biblical or the non-biblical evidence. In his view, early Israel was comprised, for the most part, of lower-class Canaanites who revolted against their Canaanite overlords. There was a small "exodus" group who became unified by way of their suzerainty treaty made at Sinai. They were in the history of their day "revolutionary" and zealous worshipers of Yahweh who tolerated no other king. This group of fervent believers came into the land of Canaan where the social setting could be described as that of a small "Egypt." With their religious beliefs, the Israelites polarized this political and religious situation. That is, when the Israelites appeared on the scene with their strong faith that God is not only King but on the side of the oppressed, they undermined the current social setting and motivated the peasants to revolt against the kings of Canaan.

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[19]See William G. Dever, <u>Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?</u> (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003) 130; and Joseph A. Callaway and Max Miller, "The Settlement in Canaan," 72-73.

[20]George E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," <u>Biblical Archaeologist</u> XXV # 3:66. Finkelstein describes Mendenhall's 1962 article as "groundbreaking," laying the foundations for the new sociological approach. See Finkelstein, <u>The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement</u>, 306. See also Megan Bishop Moore, <u>Philosophy and Practice in Writing a History of Ancient Israel</u> (London: T&T Clark, 2006) 67-68.

Therefore, the "conquest" is essentially a revolt from within, motivated by a small group of fervent Israelites who began the movement at Sinai.[21]

Mendenhall rewrites the previous theoretical assumptions. He rejects the central hypotheses of both Albright and Alt. Israel is neither a band of invading military conquerors or infiltrating semi-nomadic herdsmen. Except for the small exodus group, Israel is comprised of Canaanites who become Israelites. Israel does not come from outside the land of Canaan. She is created from within as the result of a social revolt of Canaanite peasants against the oppression of the city-state system. The Canaanite underclass fled the large cities in the western area of Palestine, and from the large cities in the Jezreel, and moved into the central hill country and there formed Israel.[22]

The basis for Mendenhall's provocative social or peasants' revolt model actually comes not from the 13th century BCE but from his reading of the Amarna tablets in the previous century. The Amarna tablets describe a Habiru rebellion against the city-state system of Canaan at that time ruled by vassal princes loyal to the Egyptians. Even though there is no mention of the role of religion in the Amarna tablets which portray this rebellion, Mendenhall nonetheless uses this 14th century BCE model for his reading of the 13th century BCE.[23]

Mendenhall's sociological theory of the "conquest" as a peasants' revolt was picked up and extended by Norman K. Gottwald. Both Mendenhall and Gottwald see early Israel as an alliance of the disenfranchised within Canaanite society. The major difference between them seems to be the role that religion plays in each theory. For Mendenhall, the zealous religious vision of the Yahwists which extends from Sinai seems to give rise to the social revolution, whereas Gottwald is closer to the Marxist view that holds religion to be a function of the revolution. Yet both Mendenhall and Gottwald agree that what had been called the "conquest" essentially took place as a revolt within the existing society of 13th century BCE Canaan, and that there was no blitzkrieg-like military campaign from across the Jordan which slaughtered the inhabitants of the land.[24]

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[21]Ibid., 79-87.

[22]Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," 66-87.

[23]Joseph A, Callaway revised by J. Maxwell Miller, "The Settlement in Canaan," 74.

[24]Norman K. Gottwald, The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 BCE (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979) xxiii & 210 ff. Gottwald contends that "Israel was emergent from and a fundamental breach within Canaanite society and not an invasion or an immigration from without." He also notes that by definition "early Israel was an eclectic formation of marginal and depressed Canaanite people, including 'feudalized' peasants . . . 'apiru mercenaries and adventurers, transhumant

Despite the creativity and originality of Mendenhall's thesis, it too was doomed for failure primarily because it did not take the archaeological data into account. Yet Mendenhall's sociological approach did make a very important contribution to the quest for Israel's origins. Mendenhall changed the focus of the debate and encouraged other scholars to look for answers to the historical problems of Israel within the social world of Canaan instead of speculating about migrations or intrusions of new groups from outside the country.[25]

From Biblical Archaeologist to Near Eastern Archaeology: A Discipline in Search of Identity

From the mid-1970s on biblical archaeology moved in three different directions or modes. Initially, for a number of reasons the discipline began to "stall." Then in the process, the work fragmented into what would become three different approaches to the archaeology and history of Israel: a multi-disciplinary approach that Dever would re-name as Syro-Palestinian or Near Eastern Archaeology; a continuation of biblical archaeology; and what came to be known as the Copenhagen school. Several complex factors coalesced and came together eventually causing a paradigm change. The changes were archaeological, theological, and literary in nature. The ramifications were shattering as well as evocative–the theological underpinnings of the biblical theology movement came to an end; and a series of new approaches to reading and understanding the Bible shifted the focus from history to story. The archaeological changes include the death of an extraordinary number of the leaders of the biblical archaeology movement in a very short time. This list includes Albright, Wright, Kenyon, R. de Vaux, Paul Lapp, Nelson Glueck, and Yohanan Aharoni. As teachers, they were able to both attract students and advocate the positions of the movement. At the same time, a new generation of archaeologists were coming of age in Israel–scholars such as Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar-- who would go on to make major contributions to the field.[26] William Dever began to

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pastoralists, tribally organized farmers and pastoral nomads (shosu), and probably also itinerant craftsmen and disaffected priests."

[25]See Israel Finkelstein, The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement, 336. See also the critique of Mendenhall and Gottwald in Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision , 104.

[26]A major breakthrough in the archaeology of Israel came after the 1967 war when Israeli archaeologists gained access to the West Bank territories for the first time. Though biblical archaeology remained somewhat parochial and tied to traditional frameworks into the 1970s and 1980s, several developments helped to set the stage for major change. These included the increasingly multi-disciplinary approach found in the "new" archaeology, regional surveys and an ecological emphasis. Building upon the early surveys of Yohanan Aharoni in Galilee, a new generation of Israeli archaeologists began to do surface surveys throughout the heart of the region that was once Samaria. It was these surface surveys that led to the proposal of an indigenous theory of Israel's origins which in time would become part of a new centrist position. Combing virtually every hill and valley, these young archaeologists gathered information that brought an explosion of new data and eventually led to not only new theories but a

advocate for a new approach to the discipline which would be more anthropological and ecological in nature. The excavations of Kenyon and Callaway at Jericho and Ai especially came to be problems. They did not confirm Albright's perspective. G. Ernest Wright, Albright's student and protégé, grew in sophistication and understanding and wrote that the archaeological data are ambiguous in relation to biblical events. In so doing, Wright seemed to disavow a fundamental premise of the early biblical archaeology movement. As one of his students wrote in the early years Wright seemed to imply that "in discerning the facts of biblical history one was coming very near to the visible footprints of the divine." But in the last years of his life, Wright made it clear that realia could not be found in the dirt. In 1971 Wright noted that "with regard to Biblical events . . . it cannot be overstressed that archaeological data are mute." He went on to state that "Fragmentary ruins, preserving only a tiny fraction of the full picture of ancient life, cannot speak without someone asking questions of them. And the kind of questions asked are part and parcel of the answers 'heard' because of predispositions on the part of the questioner."[27] By the early 1970s biblical archaeology in the United States had lost its direction and needed reevaluation.

William Dever, following the lead and direction of Mendenhall's landmark study (and perhaps the growing sophistication of his teacher G. Ernest Wright), called for a shift in the nature and direction of the movement which should now embody a "new archaeology" built upon anthropological theory and   technique.[28] No longer would the movement be called "biblical archaeology," but rather "Syro-Palestinian archaeology." Dever feared that the term

revolution in the study of early Israel. It would be precisely this kind of additional data that would allow a new generation of archaeologists to begin to formulate a new centrist position in later years.
 This survey work was done under the supervision of Moshe Kochavi of Tel Aviv University. Adam Zertal worked in the region of Shechem northward to the Jezreel Valley. Shlomo Bunimovits, Israel Finkelstein, and Zvi Lederman worked from Shechem south to about Jerusalem. Judah and Galilee were also surveyed. See especially Israel Finkelstein ed., Zvi Lederman, and Shlomo Bunimovitz, Highlands of Many Cultures: The Southern Samaria Survery: The Sites (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publications, 1997); and Israel Finkelstein, The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988).

[27]G.Ernest Wright, "What Archaeology Can and Cannot Do," The Biblical Archaeologist 34 # 3 (1971): 73. See also H. Darrell Lance, "American Biblical Archaeology in Perspective," The Biblical Archaeologist 45 # 2 (1982): 97-98. Lance argues that American Biblical Archaeology stalled and lost direction because of three factors: the death of many of its leaders; the end of the Biblical Theology Movement; and the information explosion.

[28]See especially William G. Dever, "The Impact of the 'New Archaeology' on Syro-Palestinian Archaeology," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 242 (1981): 15-29. See also William G. Dever, "Syro-Palestinian and Biblical Archaeology," in The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters, edited by Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 31-74.

"biblical archaeology" was "irretrievably tainted" through its association with fundamentalism and the desire to "prove" the Bible. Consequently, Dever advocated the separation of biblical and Syro-Palestinian archaeology. He did not question the existence of biblical archaeology but whether it could be an authentic discipline in the true sense. It had, in Dever's conception, no "independent rationale [or] methodology. . . ." Dever's challenge remained unanswered for a time but would eventually find a response in the academy. Though throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s the archaeology of Israel remained parochial, some important changes were taking place. "The "New Archaeology" from England and the United States brought a new attitude toward culture. The traditional focus of biblical archaeology had been on pottery, architecture, and a historical orientation.   But the New Archaeology brought a multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on regional studies, a concern for ecological investigation, and a view of historical change as adaption to the surrounding environment. Slowly old interpretative frameworks were discarded and gradually replaced by new theories such as the concept of the indigenous origins of Israel.[29] The new model, Dever advocated, must allow the material culture to become the primary source for history writing as opposed to the older model that allowed the Bible to set the agenda. The archaeological data and the biblical text should be in dialogue and convergences established but the material culture should take precedence.[30]

By the 1990s, the Board of Trustees of the journal The Biblical Archaeologist-- started by G. Ernest Wright in 1938 because of "the need for a readable, non-technical, yet thoroughly reliable account of archaeological discoveries as they are related to the Bible"–were discussing a name change for the journal and the possibility of holding meetings separate from The Society of Biblical Literature. In 1997, the American Schools of Oriental Research–the parent organization of the original biblical archaeology movement started by Albright–began to hold

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[29]William G. Dever, "Retrospects and Prospects in Biblical and Syro-Palestinian Archeology," The Biblical Archaeologist 45 # 2 (1982): 103. See also Ziony Zevit, "The Biblical Archaeology versus Syro-Palestinian Archaeology Debate in its American Institutional and Intellectual Contexts," in James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard, editors, The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004) 17.

[30]William Dever, Who Were The Israelites, 223-227.Dever suggests that both the biblical texts and the archaeological data must be read and considered together so that a dialogue is established between them. It is this dialogue that holds the most promise for doing a history of Israel. This dialogue proceeds most effectively when one searches for "convergences." By this Dever means "points at which the two lines of evidence, when pursued independently and as objectively as possible, appear to point in the same direction and can be projected to eventually meet."

scholarly meetings separate from the Society of Biblical Literature and with its first publication in 1998, the journal The Biblical Archaeologist changed its name to Near Eastern Archaeology.[31]

Archaeology's New Vision and Center: Fragmentation Left and Right

These changes were not easily made and were in fact part of a long process which shows that the American Schools of Oriental Research had reached something of an identity crisis especially in defining the role of the organization with overseas partners. The great majority of members who responded to a survey on the name change for the most public journal of the American Schools of Oriental Research demonstrated that a high value was placed on the journal's name. But eventually the Board authorized the name change for several reasons. The journal's readership under the old name had been stagnant for a number of years despite efforts to change that fact. It now appeared that times had changed greatly. While the term "biblical archaeologist" spoke clearly and attractively to a previous generation, now there were apparently many potential subscribers who were turned off by the term "biblical."   The American Schools of Oriental Research was now engaged in archaeological work that went beyond the bounds of the traditional geographical and disciplinary purview of biblical archaeology. There were also political issues involving young faculty as well as the work of the international centers relating to different national groups. While the change within the work of the American Schools of Oriental Research took place over a rather long period of time and reflected the anguish of a group of scholars now a generation removed from Albright, finally the decisions were made on the basis of the disciplinary realities of archaeology in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. The culture and context of Near Eastern archaeology had changed.[32]

When Ze'ev Herzog shocked the Israeli public with his "tell all" article in Ha'aretz Magazine in October 1999, he was essentially correct: current mainstream archaeologists have come to a much more sober view of the historical realities which Albright sought to prove as essentially true. Though still debated with differing views held along a continuum, centrist scholars in Israel and the United States are aware of the difficulties of holding to the historical nature of the patriarchal narratives, the Exodus from Egypt and the traditional Conquest.[33] The new center that began to develop in Near Eastern archaeology actually included the work a

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[31]American Schools of Oriental Research Newsletter 46 # 4 (Winter 1996) 1, 7.

[32]American Schools of Oriental Research Newsletter 46 # 4 (Winter 1996) 7.

[33]For an illustration of the continuum, see especially William G. Dever, Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003) 153-189. See also Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar, The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel, edited by Brian B. Schmidt (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

diverse group of scholars along a broad continuum. Put differently, the new and developing centrist position held room for divergence of opinion and a range of views on central issues, but their collective work was characterized by a growing sophistication with both biblical texts and with archaeological method. Once again there was broad agreement on issues such as the ones which had been crucial for Albright: the patriarchs, Moses, and the conquest.[34]

W. F. Albright believed that he had correctly identified the social milieu of the patriarchs in the Middle Bronze Period (2100 BCE to 1800 BCE) which was close to the biblical chronology itself. He further thought that Abraham was part of a great Amorite invasion, and that the great patriarch was the owner of donkey caravans.[35] In his important book, The Bible Unearthed, Israel Finkelstein gives what is the consensus of many contemporary scholars on the patriarchal narratives: They are a "pious pre-history"–"a literary attempt to redefine the unity of the people of Israel"–and not an accurate record of historical figures.[36] Before Finkelstein, Thomas Thompson had demonstrated in the early pages of his epoch making work that the archaeological context and literary tradition must be analyzed independently before correlations can be made. He had also argued that the Albright school had a tendency toward an easy harmonization of these two traditions without the necessary analysis, and that this "historicizing" of the Genesis texts was not only a serious error in interpretation but "totally unfounded."[37] Thompson's work was affirmed the following year by John van Seters in his book

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[34]Representative figures of Near Eastern archaeology in the 1990s and the first decade of the new century include two Americans and two Israelis: William Dever, Lawrence Stager, Israel Finkelstein, and Amihai Mazar. SeeWilliam G. Dever, What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It: What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel (Grand Rapids , Michigan: Eerdmans: 2001); William G. Dever, Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003); Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, Life in Biblical Israel (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts (New York: The Free Press, 2001); Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition (New York: The Free Press, 2006); Amihai Mazar, Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 B.C.E. (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

[35]W.F. Albright, The Biblical Period From Abraham to Ezra (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1949) 2, 9.

[36] Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts (New York: The Free Press, 2001) 27-45. Finkelstein and Silberman describe this narrative as "a brilliant story of both family and nation. . . . a universal, philosophical story about the relationship between God and humanity." It is also described as a "powerful literary achievement" which may be based on ancient local traditions.

[37]Thomas L. Thompson, The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives, 3-21.

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titled <u>Abraham in History and Tradition</u>.[38]   Though the issues continued to be debated for another ten years, many came to conclude that the historicity of the patriarchs could no longer be held as a viable position.

In contrast to the older Albright/Alt consensus that Israel came into the land either by military conquest or gradual settlement, the current view is that Israel emerged from the indigenous population of Canaan in the highland villages after the collapse of the Late Bronze city-state system. There was no mass exodus from Egypt or violent military conquest of the land. The new consensus is that the first Israelites were in fact Canaanites. Early Israel emerged from the breakdown of Canaanite culture. "Proto Israel"is to be linked with this new phenomenon of small villages which spring up on the Canaanite frontier at the beginning of Iron I approximately 1200 BCE. The general cultural situation of the early stories of Judges matches what is being learned from the archaeology of the highland settlement. That is, the archaeology of the Late Bronze age and Iron I period is not the story of decisive military battles, complete destruction of Canaanite cities, the murder of an entire population, or the triumphal victory of a group of outsiders. Based on the archaeology of the settlement, Iron I appears, to many scholars, to have been a time of major socio-economic disruption, with demographic shifts to the frontiers of Canaan, and life and death encounters between groups that continued for two centuries.[39]

Though the foregoing description typifies the new vision (along a continuum) for many scholars of the Near Eastern archaeology, it is not shared by all. Neither the old center of Albright/Alt nor the new centrist positions of Finkelstein, Mazar and Dever have held. There continues to be fragmentation on the left and on the right. In American scholarship when the

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[38]See John van Seters, <u>Abraham in History and Tradition</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) 309-310. He concluded that it is impossible to recover the Abraham of history and that the tradition dates no earlier than the exile when the Abraham tradition functioned as a model of national identity at a time when the dreams of the people were in danger of collapse.

[39]The surveys, noted earlier, revealed that during the Late Bronze Age the region was only sparsely settled. Between the end of the 13th and 11th centuries BCE, however, a network of some 300 hilltop villages had sprung up. The population estimates suggest that at the end of the Late Bronze Age there would have been approximately 12,000 people in the hill country which expanded to about 75,000 at the end of the 11th century BCE.   The villages were small and located in remote regions of highland Judah and Samaria where the villagers engaged in agriculture.   Located away from large cities and in what had been sparsely populated regions, the typical village sat on a hill or ridge with a view of the surrounding landscape.   The typical building in the villages was about 600 square feet. See Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, <u>The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts</u> (New York: The Free Press, 2001) 105-110. See also Amihai Mazar, <u>Archaeology of the Land of the Bible</u> , 328-355.

alliance between biblical archaeology and the biblical theology movement broke down new interpretive strategies began to abound–there was a shift away from history as the primary category of meaning and understanding to story.[40] An example of the significance of this turn is Northrop Frye's <u>The Great Code: The Bible and Literature</u> in which he writes: "The general principle involved here is that if anything historically true is in the Bible, it is there not because it is historically true but for different reasons. . . . And historical truth has no correlation with spiritual profundity."[41] Consequently, historical criticism came to be amplified by not only literary theories but also social scientific and cultural studies. Put differently, many scholars now began to apply new insights from literary and cultural analysis to history writing and biblical archaeology. What follows in the history of interpretation is what Norman Gottwald calls a "panoply of hermeneutical orientations."[42] This will mean eventually that the sense of authority found in the theories of the historical paradigm will be replaced by the pluralism of a variety of different historical view points. The new centrist perspective of Near Eastern archaeology will eventually find rivals in the

The scholarly debate about the nature and origin of early Israel was followed by a discussion on the nature of the monarchy, and eventually on Israelite historiography itself. The label of the "Copenhagen" school or the term "minimalists" began to be applied to the left wing of scholarship. It seems to have been William Dever who originated the use of the terms "maximalist" and "minimalist." For Dever, the American school of Albright appeared to be maximalist and the German school minimalist. Dever knew that this was an oversimplification. In actuality, he himself would side with Noth and call for biblical archaeology to be seen as a separate discipline–separate from biblical studies and to be called Syro-Palestinian archaeology. It would be a small step from this divide to describe the Copenhagen school as minimalist.[43]

The Copenhagen School: Fragmentation on the Left

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[40]See Krister Stendahl, "The Bible as a Classic and the Bible as Holy Scripture," <u>The Journal of Biblical Literature</u> 103 # 1 (March 1984): 3-10.

[41]Northrop Frye, <u>The Great Code: The Bible and Literature</u> (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1981) 41.

[42]Norman K. Gottwald, "Biblical Scholarship in Public Discourse," <u>Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches</u> (December 2002).

[43]William G. Dever, "The Patriarchal Traditions," in John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller, <u>Israelite and Judean History</u> (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977) 77. See also the critique of the distinction between "minimalist" and "maximalist" by Philip Davies (from within the Copenhagen school) in Philip Davies, "What Separates a Minimalist from a Maximalist? Not Much," in Hershel Shanks, ed., <u>Biblical Archaeology Review</u> 26:2 (March/April 2000) 24;

The group of scholars typically associated with the so called Copenhagen School includes Thomas L. Thompson, Philip Davies, Keith Whitelam, and Niels Peter Lemche. Since the 1970s when Thompson and Van Seters attacked the idea of the historicity of the Patriarchs, major changes began taking place in the study of the Hebrew Bible.[44] Though neither Thompson nor Van Seters portrayed what would become a full-fledged view of minimalism, their work did plant the seeds for a new view of the Bible.[45] While the majority of scholars concluded that the Bible contained at least some historical information, others began to contend that the Bible contained only fiction, legend, novellas, and was without historical foundation. The group of scholars who began to advocate the idea of a very late and almost entirely fictional history of Israel was dubbed "minimalist." For example, the historical material descriptive of the "Iron Age"–the time of the Judges and the Monarchy–is now described by this group as a late composition during the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The literary material, according to this view, is largely fictional in nature.

The publication of the book by Philip Davies, In Search of Ancient Israel (1992) came to be seen as something of a marker event.[46] After this publication, the dialogue became not only vigorous but also vitriolic. Davies argues that the Bible is written over a long period and completed in Judea in the 2nd century. The authors of the Biblical texts are therefore ideologues who serve the temple elite. Davies traces the ideology back to the political goals of the Judean priests who returned from exile in the Persian Period. They needed to "create" a history to legitimate their role. Therefore, they collected folk tales and legends to use to write a national myth of origin. Thus there could be no archaeological evidence of the united monarchy or a king like David, if the literary material is essentially mythological material fabricated 600 years after the fact.[47]

In retrospect, it appears that Davies carried the new paradigm of Bible as story to a natural conclusion. What was it about Davies' argument that so profoundly disturbed archaeologists and historians. It could not have been simply that he was applying literary and sociological theory to the Bible. In The Great Code, Northrop Frye had said something similar a

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[44]For a brief overview of the changing paradigm of biblical interpretation in the later part of the 20th Century, see especially Norman K. Gottwald, The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 6-33.

[45]Megan Bishop Moore, Philosophy and Practice in Writing a History of Ancient Israel (New York: T&T Clark, 2006) 75.

[46]See William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Ideology, and the Quest for an 'Ancient" or 'Biblical Israel,'" Near Eastern Archaeology 61 # 1 (March 1998): 42.

[47]Philip R. Davies, In Search of Ancient Israel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 16-21.

decade before without a major reaction or vitriolic response. What was so profoundly troubling about Davies's book may have been his announcement that Bible as story–in Davies' words "the literary and sociological innovations in biblical studies"–has actually brought on "a deeper effect than is often recognized." The new approaches of the post-Albright era have had a "humanizing" effect for the discipline and challenged the "transcendental reality" which, according to Davies had always been associated with this area of research. In as much as literary and sociological theory is non-metaphysical and human-centered, the use of this approach tends to relativize and humanize the study. Therefore, a "non-theological" paradigm is taking its place alongside the more dominant theological one.[48] It may be that Davies' volume, which essentially carries out one of the new models of the Bible as story, was so different from the historical paradigm that it touched the raw nerve of unfinished business in the seemingly fragile post-Albright synthesis. Perhaps the fragmentation now found in the larger field of Near Eastern Archaeology reflects ever so begrudgingly the beginning of the questioning of the "acceptance of reality as unordered in any objective way" as evidenced also in the community of disciplines of science, philosophy, and theology.[49]

In the Albright synthesis–especially as portrayed in the theology of G. E. Wright that God acts in history–biblical Israel and ancient Israel were held together. The loss of the Albright consensus allowed the minimalists to consider other models such as the separation of biblical Israel and ancient Israel. Using literary theory within the new paradigm of the Bible as story, the "Israel" of the Bible can be seen as a literary construct which now means that one is cautious about equating the biblical "Israel" with the historical Israel. Since the Israel as portrayed in the text is not necessarily the Israel of history, Davies and others were free to ask at what point in history did this concept of Israel arise and what was the function of this narrative in the society of its origin. Davies wrote in The Search for Ancient Israel that there were now three distinct views of Israel–biblical Israel (Israel as portrayed in the Bible), historical Israel (the people who actually existed in time and place), and "ancient" Israel (a literary/historical hybrid projected back in time by scholars).[50] This allows Davies to reassert Thompson's thesis that the Bible is misread if read historically, and that the work separating biblical Israel from ancient Israel can in fact be a constructive move which ultimately leads to a recovery of the religious meaning of

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[48]Ibid. 14-15.

[49]See Huston Smith's chapter titled "The Revolution in Western Thought," in Jeffrey Paine, ed., The Huston Smith Reader (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012) 58- 67.

[50]Ibid. 12, 17.

biblical texts.[51] Writing in an ironic mode, Thomas Thompson concludes that this new approach might even be considered "neo-Albrightian" because of the renewed effort to integrate "sub-branches" of Near Eastern history; the insistence on the independent evaluation of data used for history writing; and the use of external evidence before assuming the historicity of biblical narrative.[52]

The reaction by some centrists to Davies, Thompson, and others of similar thought was bold and sometimes very derogatory. It is likely that some, like Dever, who had invested so much in achieving an academic and respectable place for "Syro-Palestinian" archaeology (over against biblical archaeology) were offended by the accusations inherent in Davies' work that "ancient" Israel was created by scholars. There was the clear implication in the writings of the so called Copenhagen School that the scholarship associated with mainstream biblical research and archaeology was faulty and that they had mislead many–that the portrait of ancient Israel was false and therefore illegitimate. This argument brought a firestorm of protest and criticism.

Dever reacted as if he had been personally and professionally affronted. While pointing out that biblical scholars and archaeologists tend to dismiss revisionism, Dever went on to say that "I want to combat these 'minimalist' or 'revisionist' views of the history of ancient Israel by showing how archaeology can and does illuminate a historical Israel in the Iron Age of ancient Palestine."[53] Dever also claimed that "the revisionists are carrying out a classic, deliberate, single-minded 'deconstructionist' agenda." He and others saw this agenda to be "a threat to biblical studies, to Syro-Palestinian archaeology, to theological and religious studies, to the life of synagogue, and church, and even to the political situation in the Middle East."[54]

Not all scholars have reacted so negatively to those called minimalists. In an interview with Hershel Shanks, Israel Finkelstein says that the so called minimalists "are good scholars, and they are important scholars, and they have contributed a lot to historical and Biblical scholarship. We have to listen to them. . . ." Finkelstein goes on to say that the debate is actually an important and positive one. Thomas Thompson indicates another dimension to the

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[51]See Philip Davies, "What Separates a Minimalist from a Maximalist?" Biblical Archaeology Review 26 # 2 (March/April 2000): 27, 72-73.

[52]Thomas L. Thompson, "A Neo-Albrightean School in History and Biblical Scholarship?" Journal of Biblical Literature 114 # 4 (Winter 1995): 697.

[53]William G. Dever, "Save Us from Postmodern Malarkey," Biblical Archaeology Review 26 # 5 (March/April 2000): 28.

[54]William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Ideology, and the Quest for an 'Ancient' or 'Biblical' Israel," Near Eastern Archaeology 61 # 1 (Mar. 1998): 39-41.

debate when in 2009 he wrote an essay in which he argues that the biblical archaeology practiced in Israel and supported by Evangelical Christians is dominated by political and theological apologetics all of which has been used by the state of Israel for political purposes especially the disenfranchisement of the Palestinians. Put differently, the Evangelical desire to read the Bible as a historically reliable narrative along with the national impulse within the state of Israel to create a coherent story providing a shared heritage for displaced Jews has worked politically to disenfranchise Palestinians and to exclude them from similar rights and liberties.[55]

The New Biblical Archaeology: Fragmentation on the Right

If the Copenhagen School is on the left, then there is a faction on the right that is a near polar opposite. While the Copenhagen School is described (or accused) as being "minimalist," the group which continues to appropriate the moniker of "biblical archaeology" could be described as "maximalist." It is comprised of scholars like James Hoffmeier, Alan Millard, Kenneth Kitchen, and Adam Zertal. Perhaps the major distinction of this group is that they want to carry on the Albright legacy unabated and with few reforms. The thesis seems to be that in this on-going approach that biblical archaeology can be integrated perhaps in much the same way that Yigael Yadin described his task of going into the field with the Bible in one hand and the shovel in the other.[56]

In August 2001, a group of conservatives scholars met at Trinity International University to address a crisis in "biblical archaeology." William Dever's programmatic work in calling for "Syro-Palestinian" archaeology over against biblical archaeology had signaled that the Albrightian synthesis between archaeology and biblical studies had broken down and lost integrity. Now archaeologists and biblical scholars could part company. Consequently, the Trinity symposium sought to address two emerging realities: the continuing separation of archaeology from biblical studies and the threat from historical minimalism. Those who met

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[55]Israel Finkelstein in an interview in Hershel Shanks, ed., <u>Biblical Archaeology Review</u> 28 #6 (Nov/Dec 2002). Thomas L. Thompson, "Biblical Archaeology and the Politics of Nation Building," August 2009.

[56]Yadin was not a "religious fundamentalist" but a "secular fundamentalist" as described by William Dever. That is, as the "prototypical" Biblical archaeologist, Yadin was interested in the same issues as the Albright school but the issues for him were historical/national and not theological in nature. For Yadin and for other Israelis the Bible has been accepted as the foundational document of the nation and provides a link between the past and the present. Biblical archaeology continues in Israel to be a non-religious but academic enterprise albeit with emotional and existential ties between the book and the people. See Shlomo Bunimovitz, "How Mute Stones Speak: Interpreting What We Dig Up," <u>Biblical Archaeology Review</u> 21/2: 64-65.

affirmed that biblical archaeology will have a bright future where archaeological data will continue to be integrated with the Bible.[57]

Kenneth A. Kitchen's work contains this perspective of the older biblical archaeology style. In 2003 he published a book titled On the Reliability of the Old Testament. As the title implies, Kitchen attempts to extend the earlier Albrightian view of the essential historicity of the Hebrew Bible. He compares Genesis 1-11 with Mesopotamian texts and declares that these biblical texts must be dated in the 2nd Millenium BCE and not later. Like Albright, Kitchen has an anti-Wellhausen agenda and laments that the documentary hypothesis is now so widely regarded as dogma. His study of treaty and covenant forms points to the origin of the Sinai covenant in the 14th and 13th centuries and not later. Based on his work, Kitchen verifies that there was a Moses, as well as a conquest and settlement just as the Hebrew Bible indicates. There was an Israelite tribal league, and Davidic monarchy. His work demonstrates that the neo-Albrightian School or the new biblical archaeology is maximalist in its positive assumption of the relationship of the Bible and archaeology.[58]

Just when some scholars were ready to declare the death knell for biblical archaeology– that it does not really exist today as in previous years--and to suggest that the only practitioners of this style of archaeology were fundamentalists and evangelicals, some Israelis scholars reminded us that there is in Israel an old tradition of biblical archaeology that is not necessarily religious but national in scope.[59] One such Israeli scholar is Avraham Faust who in a recent article on state formation in Israel concluded that the biblical description of state formation in Israel in terms of date, place, and motives matches the "general outlines" of the data found in the archaeological finds.[60] In his award-winning book, Israel's Ethnogenesis, Faust seeks to investigate the evolution of Israel's self-identity using a synthesis of archaeological data and socio-anthropological models. He concludes that the emergence of this sense of national identity can be traced to the 12th and 11th centuries B.C.E. His critics accuse him of an "uncritical reading" of the biblical text, circular reasoning, methodological blunders, and an

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[57]James K. Hoffmeir and Alan Millard, editors, The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004) x-xi.

[58]K.A. Kitchen, On The Reliability Of The Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003) 447-500.

[59]See Ronald S. Hendel, "Biblical Views: Is There a Biblical Archaeology," Biblical Archaeology Review 32 # 4 (July/August 2006):20; Shlomo Bunimowitz, "How Mute Stones Speak: Interpreting What We Dig Up," Biblical Archaeology Review 21 # 2 (March/April 1995): 64

[60]Avraham Faust, "Abandonment, Urbanization, Resettlement and the Formation of the Israelite State," Near Eastern Archaeology 66 # 4 (December 2003): 158

overall concern with questions of historical confirmation. In the most severe criticism, however, Faust is described as deviating from the centrist concern that the material culture be the "primary source" of the investigation. As in the days of Albright, once again the biblical narrative is said to be driving the agenda for study.[61] However, the "standoff" created by Faust's work with the centrist perspective "show no signs of resolution, and for the moment, historians are left without any clear answers."[62] One scholar, Neil Silberman, laments that it appears that now we have two archaeologies.[63]

The severe nature of this divide in current practice is illustrated by two current excavations in Israel and the reaction to them. Excavators at both sites claim to have found a palace of King David, and that their work overturns the centrist position of Israel Finkelstein. Likewise, the complexity of the arguments, in both cases, involves the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. In 2005, Eliat Mazar announced that her excavations in east Jerusalem, sponsored by a conservative institute and an investment banker seeking to validate the idea that Jerusalem was the kind of city portrayed in the Bible, that she had uncovered what was the palace of King David.[1] Two years later Finkelstein published a rebuttal arguing that the remains dated to a later time.[2]

The second excavation which continues the debate on the era of King David is Khirbet Qeiyafa where archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel uses evidence to call out the "death of biblical minimalism" and debunk the theories of the Scandanavian School as well as those of Israel Finkelstein. According to Yossi Garfinkel, Khirbet Qeiyafa is the first mound to yield evidence for a regional government in the time of David, and demonstrate proof that David's kingdom fits the biblical description.[3] In 2012, Garfinkel found two small containers which appear to

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[61] Faust is the winner of the Irene Levi Sala Prize for books on the Archaeology of Israel, ASOR's G.E. Wright Book Award and the 2009 Biblical Archaeology Society Publication award. For a critique of his work, see Israel Finkelstein, "[De]Formation of the Israelite State: A Rejoinder on Methodology," Near Eastern Archaeology 68 # 4 (December 2005): 202-208; and Neil Asher Silberman, "Two Archaeologies," Near Eastern Archaeology 70: 1 (Mar 2007): 10-13.

[62] Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle, Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011) 253.

[63] Neil Asher Silberman, "Two Archaeologies," Near Eastern Archaeology 70: 1 (March 2007): 10-13.

[1] Steven Erlanger, "King David's Palace is Found, Archaeologist Says," New York Times (August 5, 2005).

[2] Israel Finkelstein, et al., "Has King David's Palace In Jerusalem Been Found? Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University 34 #2 (2007): 142-164.

[3] Yosef Garfinkel, "The Birth and Death of Biblical Minimalism," Biblical Archaeology Review (May/June 2011): 46-53.

model motifs from the later Solomonic temple as described in the Bible. Garfinkel described these objects as model shrines which reveal that motifs from a Solomonic-like shrine were found in the architecture of the region.[4] Yet Israel Finkelstein is "far from convinced that the site that Garfinkel is excavating was part of the House of David in the Judean Hills rather than a Philistine or Canaanite settlement. Even it did belong to the Kingdom of Judah, he says, he does not think it reinforces the notion of a developed kingdom in the Davidic period."[5]

Palestinian archaeologists tend to read this debate in political terms. In addressing Mazar's claim to have found the palace of King David, Hani Nur el-Din, professor of archaeology at Al Quds University, noted that Palestinian archaeologists think that biblical archaeology is essentially an attempt by Israeli archaeologists "to fit historical evidence into a biblical context." He went on to say that "the link between the historical evidence and the biblical narration, written much late, is largely missing. . . . There is a kind of fiction about the 10th century. They try to link whatever they find to the biblical narration."[6]

Conclusion

A cursory review of the history of the archaeology of Israel over the last fifty years shows that the discipline is not monolithic; that after the breakdown of the Albright-Alt consensus, the discipline splintered into three separate wings with serious tensions between the camps and with each having its own set of presuppositions and unique conclusions. The one distinguishing factor has been the role of the Bible. A new centrist position has developed which advocates the use of the material culture as a primary resource and the Bible as a secondary source. Contrary to thought in some academic circles, biblical archaeology is not dead but continues especially among evangelicals and conservatives in the United States but also in Israel where it is often seen as cultural and secular. As a "maximalist" enterprise, biblical archaeology embodies the Albright agenda and carries forward the idea that the Bible remains a primary resource. In the Copenhagen School (or minimalist camp), the history and archaeology of Israel is subservient to a unique view of the late authorship of the Hebrew Bible in the 2nd or 3rd century B.C.E. These camps are more than approaches; they also reflect states of mind and differing world views.

Narratives about the archaeology of Israel can be found in many popular news venues with stories written with varying degrees of sophistication and often with the bias of one's readership in view. In order to read and come to terms with such a complex landscape of ideas

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[4] Asaf Shtull-Trauring, "Archaeological find stirs debate on David's kingdom," Haaretz (May 9, 2012)

[5] Israel Finkelstein in Asaf Shtull-Tauring, "The Keys to the kingdom," Haaretz (May 6, 2011).

[6] Hani Nur el-Din in Steven Erlanger, "King David's fabled palace: Is this it?" New York Times (August 5, 2005). See also "Finkelstein: The finds in Khirbet Qeiyafa belongs to an Arab civilization," The Voice of Palestine (Published by the Palestine Information Center: July 28, 2013).

and worldviews, the reader needs a diverse paradigm that is broadly inclusive of current approaches in the United States, Scandanavia, Europe, and Israel. The reader must, therefore, be aware of traditional approaches of "biblical archaeology" in the United States, England, and Israel where biblical archaeology is tied to a non-religious or national quest for history and identity. As such the archaeology of Israel has been politicized and drawn into the politics of the region. Reading and understanding the archaeology of Israel is a quest for understanding along a continuum from minimalist to maximalist interpretation. Negotiating such a landscape of ideas is fraught with many pitfalls and dangers. Essentially the center has failed to hold. Though there is a new center or centrist perspective, it too has its own continuum, and continues to be assaulted by proponents from both the left and the right. Only with a detailed and inclusive map, or paradigm of ideas, can one negotiate this complex and dangerous, scholarly terrain.