2. EARLY HEBREW CHRONOLOGY

I. BEFORE ABRAHAM

For the period before Abraham, the Old Testament data are very limited and concise. From the chronological point of view, they raise questions which cannot be fully answered from our present knowledge. But comparative Ancient Near Eastern data can perhaps throw a little light on the Old Testament material.

(a) The Old Testament Data

The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are the principal sources. These serve as formal connecting links between earliest Man and the Flood (the first great crisis), and between the Flood and Abraham as ancestor of the Hebrews and of the line of promise. Such genealogies were not intended to serve just a narrowly chronological purpose in the modern sense; like those in Matthew I or Luke 3, their main purpose was theological, but this does not necessarily mean that they are without any factual basis at all. One may compare the primarily religious purpose of some Egyptian King Lists. The Table of Kings at Abydos was related to the cult of the royal ancestors, but this does not affect the chronological order or historicity of the kings that it lists; and certain groups of kings are omitted deliberately but without stating the fact. The royal offering-lists of the Hittite monarchy are also cultic documents, but their historical and chronological value is beyond all real doubt. The Sumerian King List expresses a certain concept of kingship in early Mesopotamia, but contains data of great value.

(b) Problems and External Evidence

I. Degree of Continuity. From earliest Man (Adam) to Abraham, the time covered by the genealogies (if taken to be continuous throughout) is far too short when compared with external data. Thus, if the birth of Abraham were to be set at about 2000 BC, then on the Hebrew figures

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6 It would hardly be much earlier on any calculation, cf. Section II, pp. 41-56, below.
the Flood would occur some ego years earlier, about 2300 BC. This date is excluded by the Mesopotamian evidence, because it would fall some 300 or 400 years after the period of Gilgamesh of Uruk\(^8\) for whom (in both Epic and Sumerian King List) the Flood was already an event of the distant past.\(^9\) Likewise, the appearing of earliest Man (Adam) some 1,947 years or so before Abraham on the Hebrew figures, in about 4,000 BC, would seem to clash rather badly with not just centuries but whole millennia of preliterate civilization throughout the Ancient Near East\(^10\) prior to the occurrence of the first written documents just before the First Dynasty in Egypt, c. 3000 BC, and rather earlier in Mesopotamia.\(^11\) One may well question therefore whether these genealogies are really to be understood as being continuous throughout. There are several indications which may suggest that this is not the case.

First, there is the symmetry of ten generations before the Flood and ten generations after the Flood. With this, one may compare the three series of fourteen geneations in Matthew’s genealogy of Christ (Mt. 1:1-17, esp. 17), which is known to be selective, and not wholly continuous, from the evidence of the Old Testament. Thus Matthew 1:8 says Joram begat Uzziah’, but from the Old Testament (2 Ki. 8:25; 11: 2; 14:1, 21) it is clear that in fact Joram fathered Ahaziah, father of Joash, father

\[\text{[p.37]}\]

7 Some variant figures in the LXX and Samaritan versions do not affect the main point at issue here; cf. WBD, p. 103.


of Amaziah, father of Uzziah; *i.e.*, we must understand ‘Joram begat (the line culminating in) Uzziah’ as far as chronology is concerned. A much earlier parallel is provided by the eight, nine or ten rulers who reigned from the beginning of kingship until the Flood according to an old Mesopotamian tradition prefixed to the Sumerian King List about 1800 BC. And after the Flood at least, the Sumerian King List itself is known to have sometimes omitted both individual kings and whole dynasties.

Secondly, the terminology of the genealogies does not prove that they are continuous throughout. Sometimes the adjoining narrative would suggest that certain parts of the genealogies are continuous (so: Adam to Enosh; Lamech to Shem; Nahor (?) to Terah; Terah to Abraham). Everywhere else, a continuous sequence cannot be automatically assumed without proof. Such a mixture of continuous and selective genealogy is in no way abnormal. Besides the obvious example of Matthew 1:1-17, the Abydos King List in Egypt silently omits three entire groups of kings (Ninth to early Eleventh, Thirteenth to Seventeenth Dynasties and the Amarna pharaohs) at three separate points in an otherwise continuous series; other sources enable us to know this. Or compare Jacobsen, who derived from other sources the procedure of arrangement probably followed by the ancient author of the Sumerian King List and not obvious from its structure, as well as from certain King List statements.

The phrase ‘A begat B’ does not always imply direct parenthood. This is shown by its use in Matthew I in cases where links are known (from the Old Testament) to have been omitted (*cf.* pp. 37-38, above). Likewise, in Genesis 46:18, the children that ‘Zilpah bare to Jacob’ are known to include great-grandsons. Terms like ‘son’ and ‘father’ can mean not only ‘(grand)son’ and ‘(grand)father’ but also ‘descendant’ and ‘ancestor’ respectively. The noted charioteer Jehu ‘son’ of Nimshi (1 Ki. 19:15; 2 Ki. 9:20) was strictly son of a Jehoshaphat, and so grandson of Nimshi (2 Ki. 9:2). Likewise in Amarna Letter No. 9, Burnaburiash III, King of Babylon, calls Kurigalzu I his ‘father’; but ‘(grand) father’ is to be understood, because he is more precisely entitled ‘eldest son’ of an intervening king. Ramesses II is called ‘father’ of Sethos II in Pap. Gurob 2:7, although he could not be closer than grandfather; *cf.* the address to Belshazzar in Daniel 5:11 where ‘father’=‘predecessor’ in both cases. An extreme example from Egypt is that of King Tirhakah (Twenty-fifth Dynasty, c. 680 BC) who honours his father, Sesostris III (Twelfth Dynasty, c. 1880 BC) - who lived 1,200 years earlier! One thinks also of Christ called ‘Son of David’ (*e.g.*, Mt. 9:27).

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18 Altar-inscription in a temple of Tirhakah at Semna West; Sir E. A. W. Budge, *The Egyptian Sudan*, I, 1907, p. 483 and figure.

So in Genesis 5 and 11, ‘A begat B’ may often mean simply that ‘A begat (the line culminating in) B’; in this case, one cannot use these genealogies to fix the date of the Flood or of earliest Man.

2. High Numbers and Historicity. The figures for the life-spans in the genealogies seem much too high, and suggest to the superficial observer that the individuals concerned may be purely legendary.

These high figures may be puzzling but they are not unique, and probably have no direct bearing on the possible historicity of the characters concerned.

First, the figures in Genesis 5 and 11 cannot in both cases be scaled down to ‘natural’ proportions by some arbitrary mathematical formula. In Genesis 5, all the figures are large; but in Genesis 11, each individual begets the next generation at a ‘reasonable’ age (at twenty-nine to thirty-five years of age; only Terah begets late in life at seventy), even if his total lifespan is very long.

Secondly, however bizarre they seem in themselves, the Hebrew figures are much more modest and precise than the tens of thousands of years’ reign attributed to the antediluvian kings of Mesopotamian tradition, varying from 43,200 years (En-men-lu-anna) to 18,600 years (Ubara-tutu). After the Flood and before Gilgamesh, the longest reign is that of Etana of Kish (1560 or 1,500 years), and the shortest that of Dumuzi of Uruk (100 years).

Thirdly, incredibly large figures for lives or reigns (especially after the Flood) have, in fact, no necessary bearing on historicity. Thus, we may reject in its present form the 100 years’ reign attributed to Enmebaragisi, king of Kish, as pure myth, but the stubborn fact remains that this king was real enough to leave behind him early Sumerian inscriptions, so he himself must be counted as historical, regardless of how one accounts for the Sumerian King List figure. Scholars are now beginning to recognize as originally historical various early figures who were once considered to be purely mythical heroes because of later legends that became attached to them; these include such famous names as Dumuzi (deified to become later Tammuz) and

[p.41]

19 Precisely the same approach (Sumerian DUMU, ‘son’, as ‘descendant’) is adopted for Gilgamesh and Ur-lugal in the Sumerian King List by Rowton, CAH2, I:6 (Chronology), 1962, p. 55.
20 As probably did the father of the Egyptian vizier Nesipeqashuty, referred to p. 34, above.
21 See ANET, pp. 265-266, or Jacobsen, Sumerian King List, pp. 71/73, 75/77 or Kramer, The Sumerians, p. 328.
Gilgamesh of Uruk. 24 Thus, whatever one may make of the large figures in Genesis 5 and 11, the names themselves - on the closest Ancient Oriental analogy - are not necessarily to be considered as unhistorical merely because these figures are attached to them.

(c) The Literary Structure of Early Genesis (1-9)

This now finds early parallels. New evidence bearing on the Atrakhasis Epic shows that in Mesopotamia there also existed the literary schema: creation, development and degeneration of man, list of names before the Flood, then the Flood itself. 25 As various fragments indicate that the Atrakhasis Epic certainly goes back as far as the Old Babylonian period, 26 this literary pattern had its \textit{floruit} at least as early as Abraham, an interesting point in regard to the antiquity of this form of the tradition. This is also true of the Sumerian King List, composed not later than the Third Dynasty of Ur, c. 2000 BC, and embodying the antediluvian tradition in its final form, c. 1800 BC. 27

II. THE DATE OF THE PATRIARCHAL AGE 28

As Noth has recently pointed out, 29 scholars are not all agreed upon the date of the Patriarchal Age. Does Abraham belong

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27 See p. 38, above, and references in note 13.


to c. 2000-1700 BC (so Albright, Glueck, de Vaux, Wright, etc.)? Or to the seventeenth century BC (so Rowley and Cornelius)? Or to the fourteenth century BC (so C. H. Gordon and Eissfeldt)? Which date, if any, is correct? Is the evidence really so ambiguous? In point of fact, the divergences are more apparent than real, and a positive approach yields a reasonable solution when all the main data are taken into proper consideration. There are three independent ‘main lines’ of approach:

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First, we must look to see if any major events in the Patriarchal narratives can be linked with external history.

Secondly, we must note evidesnce of date preserved in details of the narratives (personal names, legal usages, etc.) in Near Eastern context.

Thirdly, we must consider possible chronological links between the Patriarchal and later epochs.

(a) Major Events and External History

The main event of this kind is the raid of the four Eastern kings recorded in Genesis 14. Three lines of evidence are available. First, during his archaeological surveys in Transjordan, Glueck found evidence of a sharp decrease in the density of occupation there for the period between the nineteenth and thirteenth centuries BC, and he would link this with the destructive campaign mentioned in Genesis 14. Harding’s discovery of remains of the intervening period near Ammān does not affect the general picture for the rest of Transjordan. This suggests a date for Abraham before c. 1800 BC.

30 Most recently in BASOR 163 (1961), pp. 49-52.
35 ZAW 72 (1960), pp. 1-7, by setting Gn. 14 in the seventeenth century BC.
37 CAH, II: 26a (Palestine in the Nineteenth Dynasty...), 1965, p. 8.
Secondly, the names of the four Eastern kings fit the period c. 2000-1700 BC (and some also later periods). Arioch is an Arriyuk or Arriwuk (cf. Mari archives, eighteenth century BC)\(^{41}\) or Ariukki (cf. Nuzi archives, fifteenth century BC);\(^{42}\)

\[\text{[p.44]}\]

Tid'al is a Tudkhalia, a Hititite name known from the nineteenth century BC onwards,\(^{43}\) and borne by four or five Hititite kings in the eighteenth to thirteenth centuries BC.\(^{44}\) Chedor-la’omer is typically Elamite (Kutir + x)\(^{45}\) of the Old Babylonian period (2000-1700 BC) and later. Amraphel is uncertain, but is most unlikely to be Hammurapi.\(^{46}\) The individuals themselves have not yet been identified in extra-biblical documents, but this is not surprising when one considers the gaps in our knowledge of the period.\(^{47}\)

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\(^{42}\) I. J. Gelb, P. M. Purves, A. A. MacRae, Nuzi Personal Names, 1943, p. 30a. Over a millennium later, perhaps cf. an Arioch in Dn. 2: 14, 15.


\(^{44}\) It may occur at Ugarit as Tid'al in Hammurapi shown by 'mrpi\(^{46}\) of the Old Babylonian period (2000-1700 BC) and later. Amraphel is uncertain, but is most unlikely to be Hammurapi.\(^{46}\) The individuals themselves have not yet been identified in extra-biblical documents, but this is not surprising when one considers the gaps in our knowledge of the period.\(^{47}\)


\(^{46}\) Albright, op. cit., p. 49 n. 67, and earlier studies (n. 66) ; K. Jaritz, ZAW 70 (1958), pp. 255-256; favouring Hammurapi, F. Cornelius, ZAW 72 (1960), p. 2 n. 4. Against the equation, note (i) the initial 'aleph-sound in 'Amraphel as opposed to the underlying initial 'ayin in Hammurapi shown by 'mrpi\(^{46}\) of Ugarit (Laroche, Palais Royal d’Ugarit, V, 1965, pp. 84, 85, No. 60: 2); cf. also Speiser, Genesis (Anchor Bible), 1964, pp. 106-107; and (ii) element -I in Amraphel and not in Hammurapi. Some would compare Amraphel with names like Amud-pi- (or pa-) ila (reading Heb. r as d); on latter name, cf. H. B. Huffman, Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts, 1965, pp. 128-129.

\(^{47}\) On the irrelevance of such negative evidence, cf. above, pp. 30 f. and notes 37-38 with the example of the Egyptian Fourteenth Dynasty. For gaps elsewhere, compare the four eastern centuries in the known history of Ugarit between the ‘dynastic founders’ Niqmad I and Yaqaram (eighteenth century BC) and the line of Ammistamru I in the fourteenth century BC. Only two doubtful names, Ibira (J. Nougayrol, Palais Royal d’Ugarit, III, 1955, pp. xxxvi-xxxxvii, xli) and Puruquq (H. Klengel, OLZ 57 (1962), col. 454) could be attributed to this whole period, until the recent discovery of a list of former kings of Ugarit (some fourteen names preserved out of about thirty), cf. Laroche, CRAIBL: 1962, 1963, p. 95; Schaeffer/Weidner, AO 20 (1963), p. 215, and in Schaeffer (ed.), Ugaritica V: 1, 1966, alphabetic text No. 5. Even now, nothing is known of most of these kings. Gordon’s remarks about ‘dark ages’ (in Altmann (ed.), Biblical and Other Studies, 1963, p. 5) are wide of the mark. And from Mesopotamia, we know of hardly any names of kings of the Second Dynasty of Ur - a major Sumerian city-state - from either king lists or monuments (cf. Gadd, CAHF, I: 13 (Cities of Babylonia), 1962, p. 23.

Thirdly, the system of power-alliances (four kings against five) is typical in Mesopotamian politics within the period c. 2000-1750 BC, but not before or after this general period when different political patterns prevailed.\(^{48}\) In the eighteenth century BC, for example, a famous Mari letter mentions alliances of ten, fifteen and twenty kings.\(^{49}\) At least five other Mesopotamian coalitions are known from the nineteenth/eighteenth centuries BC.\(^{50}\) One may also note the role of Elam in the

eighteenth century BC (even exchanging envoys with Qatna in Syria),\(^{51}\) and perhaps earlier. ‘Tid’al, king of nations’ resembles the federal great chiefs in Asia Minor of the nineteenth to eighteenth centuries BC (e.g., Anittas). At this period, Assyrian merchant archives in Cappadocia mention almost a dozen different cities each under its own rubā’um or ruler.\(^{52}\) From time to time, one of these rulers would, by subduing his neighbours, become a paramount chief (rubā’um rabīum) or Great King; so Anittas of Kussara supplanted the ruler of Burushkhatum as chief ruler.\(^{53}\) Tid’al could well have been just such an overlord, or else a commander of warrior-groups like those known as Umman-manda from at least c. 1700 BC onwards.\(^{54}\)

\(^{48}\) The upper limit is the hegemony of the Third Dynasty of Ur; the lower limit, the ephemeral supremacy of Hammurapi of Babylon; cf. D. O. Edzard, Die ‘Zweite Zwischenzeit’ Babyloniens, (1957) pp. 1-2, 9-10, 44-49, 180-184. After his day, Mesopotamia was temporarily divided between the ‘Sea-land’, Babylon, the Kassites, Assyria and a brief Khana-dynasty (cf. Gadd, CAH\(^2\), II: 5 (Hammurabi and the End of his Dynasty), 1965, pp. 47-54), but these in due time were reduced to Assyria and Kassite rule in Babylonia (cf. Schmökel, HDO, II:3, pp. 172-174). Likewise, in Asia Minor the Old Hittite state became the main power from the seventeenth century onwards (cf. Schmökel, op. cit., pp. 123-124; O. R. Gurney, The Hittites, 1961, pp. 22-24; H. Otten, Saeculum 15 (1964), 115-124). In Upper Mesopotamia, in the great west bend of the Euphrates, there arose the Mitanni-kingdom from c. 1600 BC (cf. R. T. O’Callaghan, Aram Naharaim, 1948, p. 81, Table; I. J. Gelb, Hurrians and Subarians, 1944, pp. 70 ff; Schmökel, op. cit., pp. 159-160; A. Goetze, JCS 11 (1957), pp. 67, 72).

\(^{49}\) G. Dossin, Syria 19 (1938), pp. 117-118; S. Smith, Alalakh and Chronology, 1940, p. 11.

\(^{50}\) First, an alliance of Belakum of Eshnunna with Akkad and three tribal peoples (Edzard, op. cit., pp. 105, 106, 121). Second, Rimmanu (of Malgium?) defeated a four-power alliance (ibid., pp. 157, 160). Third, Rim-Sin of Larsa defeated a coalition of five powers (ibid., pp. 108, 155, 157). Fourth, Hammurapi did so in his twenty-ninth year (ibid., p. 181); and fifth, defeated an alliance of four groups in his thirtieth year (ibid., p. 182).


For early Mesopotamian expeditions into the Westland like that of Genesis 14, one may in some measure compare the texts about Sargon of Akkad and Naram-Sin (c. twenty-fourth to twenty-third centuries BC) invading to Amanus in Syria and possibly further northwest 55 mention of relations with Didanum (between Euphrates and Syria?) 56 during the Third Dynasty of Ur (c. twenty-second to twenty-first centuries BC), 57 and the expedition of Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria to Lebanon (nineteenth or eighteenth century BC). 58

The overthrow of the cities of the plain (including particularly Sodom and Gomorrah) by seismic movement and conflagration (Gn. 19) 59 cannot be independently dated at present; their ruins are apparently under the Dead Sea, and the neighbouring site of Bab-edh-Dhra may have come to an end in the twenty-first century BC before they did. 60

(b) Indications of Date in the Narratives

I. Power-alliances between Mesopotamian states (Gn. 14) are typical for c. 2000-1750 BC (see above, pp. 45 f.).

2. The personal names of the Patriarchs and their families can be directly compared with identical or similarly formed names in Mesopotamian and Egyptian 61 documents of the twentieth to eighteenth centuries BC and occasionally later. Thus, one may compare Abram with Ab(m)rama in tablets from Dilbat, 62 Abraham with Aburahana (exclusion-texts), 63 Jacob with

55 See Gadd, CAH 2, I: 19 (Dynasty of Agade and Gutian Invasion), 1963, pp. 10-16, 27-29. From a still earlier period, note the discovery of archaic Sumerian tablets in a Neolithic site in S. Rumania(!), although probably not brought by Sumerians so far (N. Vlassa, Dacia, (NF), 7 (1963), pp. 485-494, esp. 490); my thanks go to Frau I. Fuhr for this reference.
The opinion of some Old Testament scholars that Gn. 14 is merely a late midrash (e.g., de Vaux, RB 53 (1946), p. 323 (=Die hebr. Patr., p. 3). Disputed by Speiser, Genesis (Anchor Bible), 1964, p. 124: 5, overlooking the possibility that an Akkadian name may have been assimilated to a similar-sounding W. Semitic name in Palestine. De Vaux, RB 72 (1965), p. 8, also compares from Ugarit (fourteenth-thirteenth centuries BC) the

Ya’qub-il (Chagar-Bazar, etc.), 64 Zebulon with Zabilanu (Egyptian65 and Old Babylonian66 sources), Asher with Ashra, etc. 67 The (Marē-) Yamina of the Mari texts may be

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semantically parallel in name with Hebrew Benjamin.68 All these parallels fit well into the nineteenth to seventeenth centuries BC.

3. Seasonal occupation69 of the Negeb region on the south-west borders of Palestine is archaeologically attested70 for the twenty-first to nineteenth centuries BC (Middle Bronze Age I) - but not for a thousand years earlier or for eight hundred years afterwards. Abraham and Isaac spent time in this area (Gn. 20:1; 24:62); as they were keepers of flocks and herds71 and occasionally grew crops of grain (Gn. 26:12; 37:7), their activities there would best fit the Middle Bronze Age I period, c. 2100-1800 BC, 72 considering their need of assured water sup-

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name Abiramu (Nougayrol, Palais Royal d’Ugarit, III, 1955, p. 20) or Abrm (Viroilleaud, ibid., V, 1965, pp. 117-118, No. 95: 2, 4), an equation tacitly accepted by Speiser, loc. cit., but rejected by Albright, BASOR 163 (1962), p. 50 n. 69, perhaps overlooking the possibility of i being a connecting-vowel, not always 1st pers. sing. suffix.

63 Posener, Princes et Pays..., E.55; see Albright, BASOR 83 (1941), p. 34; n alternating with m.


65 Sethe, Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten ..., p. 47, and Albright, JPOS 8 (1928), p. 239; Posener, Princes et Pays .... p. 73 (E. 16) and Albright, BASOR 83 (1941), p. 34.


69 For the probably mainly seasonal nature of this occupation, cf. Albright, BASOR 142 (1956), p. 31 n. 35, and BASOR 163 (1961), p. 50 n. 68.


71 It is going far beyond the biblical evidence to turn Abraham into a full-time donkey caravaneer or a professional merchant (-prince) as suggested by Albright (BASOR 163 (1961), pp. 26-54 passim) on the one hand and by Gordon JNES 17 (1958), pp. 28-31 and Fisher (JBL 81 (1962), pp. 264-270) on the other. The verb šēr in Hebrew can as easily be ‘to move around’ as ‘to trade’ (cf. Speiser, BASOR 164 (1961), pp. 23-28, plus note by Albright); in any case, opportunity to trade (simply, buy and sell) does not necessarily make one a professional merchant. We await with interest Albright’s promised evidence for ‘Apiru = donkeyman, caravaneer, but share the misgivings of de Vaux (RB 72 (1965), p. 20), in view of the many contexts of Hit ‘apiru that would not fit this interpretation.

72 On the date, see Albright, BASOR 163 (1961), pp. 38-40 (in agreement with Glueck, e.g. in BASOR 152 (1958), p. 20, or Rivers in the Desert, 1959, p. 68). Noth’s date of the twenty-first-twentieth centuries BC (VTS, VII, p. 266) thus ends a century too early, and hence he exaggerates unwittingly the supposed divergence between this and other data, e.g. Nuzu.

plies and pasture or fodder for their livestock (especially as sojourners and not just passing straight through the area).

4. Freedom and wide scope of travel is particularly evident in the Old Babylonian period. In the Mari archives, envoys and others cross-carry the whole Near East from Hazor in Palestine to Elam in the far south-east, while earlier still we have record not only of innumerable merchant caravans but also of detailed ‘itineraries’ all the way from Babylon or Assur into the heart of Asia Minor. And as Abraham in Palestine was prepared to send all the way for his son’s wife to North Mesopotamian Harran, so similarly we find Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria sending to the King of Qatna in Syria for the same purpose. Semi-nomadic tribes ranged far and wide, and sometimes took to crop-cultivation and more settled life.

5. The religion of the Patriarchs included prominently the concept of the ‘God of the fathers’, first stressed by Alt. However, the best parallels for this come not from his Nabataean examples (about 2,000 years later) but, as Albright and Cross have pointed out, from the Old Assyrian tablets of the nine-

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teenth century BC from Cappadocia as noted by Lewy. There is no evidence that the different designations, ‘the God of Abraham’, ‘the Fear of Isaac’, ‘the Mighty One of Jacob’, were applied to separate minor deities as Alt suggested; as so often in the Ancient Near East, they are but multiple epithets of a single God.

6. Patriarchal customs of inheritance find close parallels in the Nuzi archives from Mesopotamia, c. 1500 BC. These parallels do not necessarily imply a date for the

73 Cf. latterly the remark by A. L. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, 1964, p. 120, top.
78 E.g., Kupper, op. cit., p. 31; cf. G. Posener in CAH, I:21 (Syria and Palestine), 1965, pp. 24-29.
79 A. Alt, Der Gott der Väter, 1929; now in KS, 1, 1953, pp. 1-78.
81 J. Lewy, Revue de l’Histoire des Religions 110 (1934), pp. 50-55, 64-65 A similar reference occurs in ARMT, V, Letter 20, line 16, in the eighteenth century BC, as noted by J. P. Hyatt, VT 5 (1955), p. 131 and n. 4 (note that the eight-century Hittite Hieroglyphic example from Topada (after Del Medico) is illusory; cf. my Hittite Hieroglyphs, Aramaeans and Hebrew Traditions, forthcoming).
82 Or possibly ‘Kinsman’? So Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, 1957 ed., p. 248 and n. 71.
84 See references, p. 154, note 2, below.

Patriarchs as late as 1500 BC,\textsuperscript{85} because Old Babylonian tablets from Ur (nineteenth to eighteenth centuries BC) would afford equally good parallels,\textsuperscript{86} a point unknown to most Old Testament scholars. Also the parallel with the Hittite laws\textsuperscript{87} in Genesis 23 may likewise go back long before the date of the extant copies of these laws (fourteenth to thirteenth centuries BC).\textsuperscript{88}

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There is no positive reason why there should not be some Hittites in Palestine in the nineteenth to eighteenth centuries BC. They intervened politically in Syria in the eighteenth to seventeenth centuries BC.\textsuperscript{89} As early as c. 1800 BC, a Lycian from West Asia Minor - ‘Kukun’s son Lugq(a)’ (= ‘the Lycian’) - is attested at Byblos in Phoenicia;\textsuperscript{90} limited Anatolian penetration of Phoenicia and Palestine can be found quite early.\textsuperscript{91}

The parallels in social themes between the Patriarchal narratives and the Ugaritic epics on tablets of the fourteenth to thirteenth centuries BC do not prove a late date either,\textsuperscript{92} for it is known on clear linguistic evidence that those epics originated in the twentieth to sixteenth centuries BC.\textsuperscript{93}

Finally, the price of twenty shekels of silver paid for Joseph in Genesis 37:28 is the correct average price for a slave in about the

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\textsuperscript{85} As is assumed by Gordon, \textit{JNES} 13 (1954), pp. 56-57; cf. discussion by Noth, \textit{VTS}, VII, pp. 266-267, 270.


\textsuperscript{87} See below, pp. 154-156, and note 7.


\textsuperscript{91} As a parallel for Hittites being plainly in Anatolia and just a few in Palestine (the sons of Heth in Genesis), one may note not only the similar penetration by Horites or Hurrians (cf. I. J. Gelb, \textit{Hurrians and Subarians}, 1944, pp. 52-62, 69-70; Wiseman, \textit{Alalakh Tablets}, 1953, p. 9, for Syria), but also the earlier examples of northern newcomers to Syria-Palestine (not all Amorites) with distinctive metalwork (cf. K. M. Kenyon, in \textit{CAH}, I: 21 (\textit{Syria and Palestine}, c. 2160-1780 BC), 1965, pp. 52-53 and ref.s.), and of penetration of Syria-Palestine by the bearers of Khirbet Kerak pottery and material culture in the twenty-fourth century BC (cf. C. A. Burney, \textit{Anatolian Studies} 8 (1958), pp. 173-174, and references p. 165 n. 21, plus K. Bittel, \textit{Prähistorische Zeitschrift} 34/35: 2 (1953) pp. 142-143. For early Hittites and Horites, see my \textit{Hittite Hieroglyphs, Aramaeans and Hebrew Traditions} (forthcoming), chapter II: 1.


eighteenth century BC.\textsuperscript{94} Earlier than this, slaves were cheaper (average, ten to fifteen shekels), and later they became steadily dearer.\textsuperscript{95} This is one more little detail true to its period in cultural history.

\textbf{(c) Links with Later Periods}

Genesis 15, Exodus 12:40 and certain genealogies link the Patriarchs to the period of the Exodus.

First, Abraham was warned that his descendants should dwell in an alien land for 400 years (Gn. 15:13). (There is no reason why the figure ‘400 years’ should not refer to the whole of verse 13: \textit{i.e.}, to the sojourn as a whole, \textit{culminating} in enslavement and oppression, rather than be forced unnecessarily to mean that the Hebrews were to be slaves for four centuries against the evidence of Genesis 41 to 50.) In due course, it is recorded that the Israelites left Egypt on the 430th anniversary of their ancestor’s entry into Egypt.\textsuperscript{96} The 400 years is a round figure in prospect, while the 430 years is more precise in retrospect;\textsuperscript{97} there is no contradiction in this.

Secondly, Abraham is told that his descendants will re-enter Canaan in ‘the fourth generation’ (Gn. 15:16, Hebrew \textit{dôr}). The simplest explanation is that the four \textit{dôr} correspond to the 400 years, not to ‘generations’ in the modern sense. This is suggested not by a mere wish for harmonization but by perfectly clear evidence from Ugaritic\textsuperscript{98} and early Assyrian sources that \textit{dôr} or \textit{dāru} can mean a ‘span’ or ‘cycle of time’ of eighty years or more.\textsuperscript{99}


\textsuperscript{95}\textit{E.g.}, in fifteenth century BC and later, 30 or even 40 shekels; in the first millennium BC, the general price rose to 50 shekels and even to go or 120 shekels by Persian times. See I. Mendelsohn, \textit{Slavery in the Ancient Near East}, 1949, pp. 117-155, and in \textit{IEJ} 5 (1955), p. 68; Kitchen in \textit{NBD}, pp. 1195-1196.

\textsuperscript{96} The LXX interpretation of 430 years in Egypt \textit{and} Canaan, \textit{i.e.} 215 years in each land, is excluded because of (i) Ex. 12: 41 (the 430 years are counted from entering \textit{Egypt}), and (ii) Abraham and Isaac were not ‘children of Israel’ but ancestors of Israel, and so their time in Canaan could not be included in the sojourn of Israel and his descendants.

\textsuperscript{97} Paul in Gal. 3:17 is concerned to establish one single point: that the Law came long after God’s covenant with Abraham. He therefore makes his point, not by laboriously calculating the actual interval between these events, but simply and incisively by citing the one well-known figure - the 430 years - included within that interval. That Paul made use of the LXX interpretation of the 430 years is a gratuitous and unnecessary assumption, where the wish of the modern commentator is perhaps too often father to the thought.


\textsuperscript{99} Albright, \textit{loc. cit.}, also noting eighty years in Syriac; R. C. Thompson, \textit{LAAA} 19 (1932), pp. 105-106: in the eighteenth century BC, Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria spoke of 7 \textit{dāru} having elapsed between the end of the kingdom of Akkad and his own reign, which would work out at c. 70 years in practice (\textit{cf. Chicago Assyrian Dictionary}, 3/D, 1959, p. 115b), allowing five centuries to have elapsed (\textit{cf. Albright, The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra\textsuperscript{4}}, 1963, p. 9, for dates; or \textit{CAH\textsuperscript{2}} dates sixty years earlier). But, like later; Assyrian kings, Shamshi-Adad may have considered the period longer than it really was, and so his \textit{dāru} may be longer. The Hebrew \textit{dôr} certainly was (\textit{cf. WBD}, p. 153a, 2).

Thirdly, we have the genealogies. Some scholars\textsuperscript{100} dismiss the figure of four centuries between the Patriarchs and the Exodus by appealing to Exodus 6:16-20, a ‘genealogy’ of Moses and Aaron, which they interpret as four literal generations lasting only a century or more.\textsuperscript{101} In doing so, they overlook the following facts.

1. Exodus 6:16-20 is not a full genealogy, but only gives the tribe (Levi), clan (Kohath) and family-group (Amram by Jochebed) to which Moses and Aaron belonged, and not their actual parents (also not named in Exodus 2). The Amramites are shown as being already numerous at the Exodus (\textit{cf.} Nu. 3:27, 28), so Amram must be considered as having lived much earlier.\textsuperscript{102}

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2. The statement that ‘Jochebed bore to (Amram) Aaron and Moses’ in Exodus 6:20 does not prove immediate descent: in Genesis 46:16-18, the children that Zilpah ‘bore’ to Jacob include great-grandsons.\textsuperscript{103}

3. As we have already noted, Ancient Near Eastern genealogies were often selective, not continuous. From Egypt, in the eighth century BC, we have a statue (Cairo 42,212) which would appear to give its owner the priest Tjaenhesret a continuous ancestry of six generations. But the fuller genealogy of Cairo statue 42,211 shows that six generations are omitted at one point and three more at another on the first statue. Likewise, several generations are missing between Ramesses II and the Twenty-first Dynasty in the Berlin genealogy published by Borchardt.\textsuperscript{104} In other genealogies for our period, Bezalel is in the seventh generation from Jacob (\textit{cf.} 1 Ch. 2:1, 4, 5, 9, 18-21); Elishama (Nu. 1:10) is in the ninth generation from Jacob with Joshua (younger contemporary of Moses) in the eleventh (\textit{cf.} series Jacob – Joseph - Ephraim, plus 1 Chronicles 7:22-27). And there is no guarantee that these and others are wholly continuous. Compare, for example, that of Nahshon, head of the tribe of Judah (Nu. 1:7), who in 1 Chronicles 2:1, 4, 5, 9, 10, is in the sixth generation after Jacob.

The genealogies cannot, therefore, be used to contradict the 430-Year period of the other references. In cases like this, continuity of genealogies has to be proved, not assumed. Four centuries from Jacob in about the late eighteenth century BC would bring us to the thirteenth century BC for the date of the Exodus, a date known to be suitable on independent grounds now to be considered.

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\textsuperscript{101} So Rowley, \textit{From Joseph to Joshua}, pp. 70-73; Gordon, \textit{loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Cf.} already, \textit{WBD}, p. 153b, top; the classification tribe - clan - family group is also partly seen by D. N. Freedman, \textit{BANE}, pp. 206-207 (mixed with some unnecessary speculation). This classification also applies to Jos. 7:1 and entries in Nu. 26, cited by Gordon, in Altmann (ed.), \textit{Biblical and Other Studies}, 1963, p. 4 and n. 4.

\textsuperscript{103} See also the material on genealogies and lists noted above, pp. 38 f. with notes 15-19. Nu. 26:59 and 1 Ch. 6:3 merely follow Ex. 6:20 and have no separate evidential value.

\textsuperscript{104} For these, \textit{cf.} Kitchen, \textit{The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt} (forthcoming) and recent parallels quoted by Albright, \textit{Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra}, 1963, p. 9 and n. 26.
The total evidence, therefore, accords very well with a date for the Patriarchs in the twentieth to eighteenth centuries BC, and shows a reasonable degree of consistency when properly interpreted.  

105 Contrast O. Eissfeldt, *CAH*2, II:26a (*Palestine in the Nineteenth Dynasty, Exodus and Wanderings*), 1965, pp. 8, 10, whose treatment of this topic is superficial and misleading; cf. my review article in *THB* 17 (1966), pp. 63-97.