

"Unwise and unscientific muses from archaeology... again."

In any science, interpretation of data must arise naturally from the data itself. Outside of this strict approach we have only guesswork. And many archaeologists have guesswork by the shovelfull! It is most interesting that archaeology has outspoken critics (also see my articles on BBC archaeology programmes) who think it wonderful to dig for victory merely as an aid to destroy the Bible, and yet the same discipline keeps coming up with solid support for scripture!

Time and again, digs show real proof that scripture is right... but some archaeologists, with atheism in mind, abuse their science with garbage dug up not from the deserts, but from their own minds. I would have thought, by now, that they would be better off staying silent until they have more evidences! As always when science contradicts scripture, it relies not on actual proofs but on interpretation of evidences (see elsewhere for my definitions of the difference, e.g. SC-001).

The latest 'proof' against the Bible, that camels did not exist in Abraham's time, is currently being vaunted by silly archaeologists who must have been drunk or struck down by some Middle Eastern fever, and is doing the usual media rounds. But, the hole in their argument is big enough for a camel to walk through. Speculation is acceptable, so long as it is clearly identified as speculation.

Sadly, in an effort to seem innovative and to make headlines many archaeologists go off-track, using Mickey-Mouse arguments. Every time I read these stupidities I tend to laugh out loud. Indeed, it is a fault of mine – if the researchers were in front of me now I would laugh in their faces, such is the unscientific nature of their ramblings. This is not PC, but it accurately displays my contempt for bad science.

The Silly Unscientific Argument

Two researchers at Tel Aviv University (TAU) studied the bones of camels found in an area of ancient copper mines in the Aravah Valley, south of the Dead Sea. Using radiocarbon dating and other techniques, they determined that camels were first used in the mining operations near the end of the 10th century BC. (Sapir-Hen, Ben-Yoseph, E: *"The introduction of domestic camels to the Southern Levant: Evidence from the Aravah valley"*, 40:277-285, 2013).

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Written by K B Napier

Tuesday, 25 February 2014 22:15

They state that this is the first evidence of domesticated camels in ancient Israel. Therefore, they conclude, camels were NOT used before that time. That is NOT a *scientific* conclusion but a very poor assumption.

This would be almost 1,000 years later than the time of the patriarchs, when camels first appear in the Bible. The most memorable account is the story of Abraham's servant, Eliezer, in Genesis 24, who is sent by Abraham to find a wife for his son Isaac. He finds Rebecca, who not only draws water from a well to quench Eliezer's thirst, but also waters his 10 camels. Of course, this direct report is discounted, because researchers are atheistic.

The Atheistic Media's Circus

The Tel Aviv study was quickly used to claim that the Bible was written or edited long after the events it describes. Media folks jumped on the circus bandwagon to heap scorn on the Bible. In doing so they prove to us that they have no interest in science, but only in Bible-bashing. Anyone with any idea of the scientific process would immediately condemn the Tel Aviv assumptions for being unscientific. Headlines included:

'The Mystery of the Bible's Phantom Camels'

'Camels Had No Business in Genesis'

'Will camel discovery break the Bible's back?'

'Study of camel bones suggests Bible may be wrong'

'Camel archaeology contradicts the Bible'

But evangelical scholars say the claims are overblown. For myself, I see the claims as so much

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hot air, because they cannot scientifically prove their case!

The use of camels for copper mining is an important discovery. *"But to extrapolate from that and say they never had domesticated camels anywhere else in Israel in the 1,000 years before that is an overreach,"* said Todd Bolen, professor of Biblical Studies at The Master's College in Santa Clarita, California. *"The conclusions are overstated."*

Or, to be more accurate and less PC (because I could not care less for the sensibilities of academics who are intellectually blind) – the conclusions are unscientific nonsense. Once again, we see pseudo-science vaunted by the media and by archaeologists whose only interest is the destruction of scripture's credibility, at any cost. If the researchers had given their opinion and called it speculative, I could accept what they said without much ado. But, to make a fixed conclusion out of something that is not found is bad science. In essence, the Tel Aviv (bad) conclusions are like saying that the stars do not exist because a researcher is blind and cannot see them.

While it has been difficult for archaeologists and historians to pin down the exact time and location when camels were domesticated, there is evidence to suggest that the Genesis accounts are *not* a biblical anachronism.

Two recent academic papers written by evangelical scholars Konrad Martin Heide (a lecturer at Philipps University of Marburg, Germany), and Titus Kennedy (an adjunct professor at Biola University), refer to earlier depictions of men riding or leading camels, some of which date back to the early second millennium BC (the time of Abraham). What an inconvenient truth!

One example from Ugarit, shows a camel listed amongst other domesticated animals, the list dating to the Old Babylonian period (1950-1600 BC). That is, it is NOT a biblical account so cannot be attributed to foolish Bible-believers!

Kennedy said, *"For those who adhere to a 12th century BC or later theory of domestic camel use in the ancient Near East, a great deal of archaeological and textual evidence must be either ignored or explained away."*

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He said that he noticed archaeologists who work in Israel and Jordan seem to date camel domestication later than those who work in Egypt and Mesopotamia (Christianity Today interview). This ought to warn researchers to be more careful in their statements and, as any student knows, a comparative study of similar data is fundamental to proper academic research.

He adds that *"[Israel] doesn't have much writing from before the Iron Age, 1000 BC, so there aren't as many sources to look at. Whereas in Egypt, you have writing all the way back to 3000 BC, and in Mesopotamia the same thing."* He concludes that according to Egyptian and Mesopotamian sources, domestication probably occurred as early as the third millennium BC. To me this makes more sense, particularly as writing and documented records existed very early on in human history.

The real problem is not just geographical; it is to do with straightforward disbelief in God. Indeed, the conclusions of the Tel Aviv archaeologists follow the heretical, unbelieving theology of the Higher and Lower Critical schools of Germany that wreaked havoc in all schools of Biblical studies (see my articles). It was not as if their work had any merit – rather, it was just an exercise in very bad research and very bad science.

Kennedy thinks the TAU researchers not only ignored evidence from outside Israel, but they also assumed too much about their own research. *"All they really tell us is that at that particular place where they were working they found some camel bones that they interpreted as in a domesticated context between the ninth and 11th centuries BC,"*

Kennedy said.

"It doesn't tell us that camels couldn't have been used in other nearby areas earlier than that." Precisely! The two researchers fabricated their ideas and did not allow the evidences to speak for themselves... the usual pattern found in all unbelieving science.

‘Not Found’ does not necessarily mean ‘Not Existing’!

It is paramount for all archaeologists to remember their own maxim, that ***"absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."***

The absence of evidence for Hittites was once a false reason to have hot 19th-century debates against the Bible, until the vast Hittite empire was discovered in Anatolia. Questions about the Book of Daniel once focused on the absence of the prominently featured Belshazzar from Babylonian king lists, until it was discovered that Belshazzar was actually the son of Nabonidus, and co-regent. And very recently, though smirking archaeologists (who recently spoke out on the BBC!) denied that David had a strong and mighty kingdom, and some even claimed David

Now Camels are Anti-God Missiles!

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Tuesday, 25 February 2014 22:15

was just a myth, evidences have been found to prove both biblical reports to be true! Archaeologists are too quick to speak out! (Though it does not matter, because academia just closes ranks and forgets its own stupidity).

The many media reports which unquestionably accepted the TAU findings is testimony to the fact that mainstream archaeologists and Bible scholars believe (without good reason) the Bible was written or assembled in the first millennium BC. They are highly sceptical of any historical information that predates that period. This, again, is the result of the inroads made by the unbelieving Higher and Lower Critics in the 19th century, even though their work is not just suspect but easily debunked. Some of this is criticised by myself in earlier articles on BBC archaeology programs.

Bolen also observed that archaeologists at TAU support a low chronology for the United Monarchy of Israel, which minimizes the importance of David and Solomon, and typically weights archaeological evidence more strongly than the biblical account. As one observer from Australia commented: "It seems like this is a pretty desperate reach to discredit the Bible." Basically, that is all it is.

Additional Notes:

The two archaeologists who write the Tel Aviv hypothesis clearly ignored the biblical accounts of camels being used at the time of Abraham (e.g. Genesis 12). This is because most archaeologists foolishly reject the Bible as an historical document! Yet, the number of times archaeologists find PROOF that the Bible's accounts are accurate and historical is ridiculously prevalent! In this way archaeology must logically reject its own findings, when they reject the biblical account! Increasingly, they are discovering that what the Bible says is true... but their unbelieving minds refuse to be more circumspect.

Job, who lived in Arabia roughly at the same time as Abraham, is found to have about 6000 camels at the end of the book named after him... not bad for a time when there were no domesticated camels at the time of Abraham! This is supported by an archaeological paper that says domesticated camels were used between 2,500 BC to 1400 BC! (Saber, A. S., The camel in ancient Egypt, Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting for Animal Production Under Arid Conditions 1:208–215, 1998, p. 208). The media, then, has been very selective in its denunciation of scriptural historical records, by ignoring OTHER archaeological evidences and research, and by ignoring the glaringly unscientific nature of the Tel Aviv conclusions.

Now Camels are Anti-God Missiles!

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Tuesday, 25 February 2014 22:15

A comment by Creation.com puts it like this:

“There is a long and glorious history of archaeologists claiming that what they see out at their dig sites contradicts the Bible, only to be proved wrong as later discoveries come to light. However, the evidence to disprove this spurious claim existed long before this latest argument was put forward. The lesson from this and similar stories is clear: the Bible is reliable and trustworthy, and any evidence that seems to call the biblical record into question will, when interpreted accurately, fit with the Bible’s historical record.” (<http://creation.com/camels>).

As we see routinely in the stupid comments made by leading philosophical atheists, some archaeologists are more than willing to say ridiculous things in order to discredit scripture. The fact that what they say is garbage and very bad science does not bother anyone!

Note on Lidar Sapir-Hen

I do not doubt this woman’s intelligence. But, I do doubt her motives, because she puts her unbelief (even in her own Israeli/Jewish background) before facts, and this means that her interpretation of data cannot be trusted. She has written material that claims the Bible was “written late” and is “full of errors” (reported in English Islam Times, 7th February, 2014). She thus follows the German Critical schools of theology, which clouds her judgment. Islamicists, of course, jubilantly jumped on her assertions as ‘proof’ the Bible is wrong. Yet, as we see from just a few OTHER papers, her assertions are just her personal assumptions and not scientific proofs. Let it be repeated – camels were ridden and domesticated at the time of Abraham!

This matter is easily resolved scientifically, by simply comparing similar researches! For Christians however, we must believe scripture before we believe science. This is far from being naïve or stupid – it is common sense if we accept the Bible as historical. Why should we not do so, when we accept all manner of ‘secular’ literature as ‘historical’, and when archaeology itself repeatedly proves that what the Bible says is true? The reasons for accepting the historicity of scripture are far, far greater than silly reasons that deny it!

It is my personal view that good theology is also good science. This is because NO SCIENCE can prove scripture to be wrong. That is a fact. Yet, allusions to science in scripture are ALWAYS shown to be correct. So, why should I place faith in science on its own? Rather, I place my trust in what scripture says every time – knowing that at some time science must acknowledge what it says to be true. However, even if certain things are not proved by science in my lifetime, it does not matter, because the Bible has proved itself to be accurate and

Now Camels are Anti-God Missiles!

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trustworthy time and again, whereas science is bedevilled (literally) by atheism masquerading as truth.

To go back to the Tel Aviv story... what matters here is not how intelligent the researchers are, but how they come to bad conclusions based not on science but on their unbelief. To say that camels were not used in the time of Abraham is a very bad error, one that has no basis in factual evidence. Even if we leave out what the Bible says, we have the research of other non-Christian academics!

In my MA I concluded that what leads modern psychiatry and psychology astray is NOT the data, but how practitioners *interpret* that data. Bad interpretation in science is pandemic. This is because scientific data is mangled by unreasonable personal beliefs, which make 'interpretations' that are mere philosophical myths and vendettas. Christians who fear science should always remember this! It is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for archaeologists to berate the Bible with stupid statements and bad science... especially when later researches prove them to be wrong (many times, not just once)!

Will they ever learn? I do not think so.

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