

6. TIMEKEEPING IN THE MIDDLE AGES Historians discuss the “chaos reigning in the mediaeval datings.” Peculiar mediaeval anachronisms

The Scaligerian chronological version was far from being the only one. It competed with versions that were significantly different. Bickerman mentions the “chaos reigning in the mediaeval datings” ([217], page 73). Furthermore, the analysis of ancient documents shows us that old concepts of time were substantially different from modern ones.

“Before the XIII-XIV century the devices for time measurement were a rarity and a luxury. Even the scientists didn’t always possess them. The Englishman Valcherius... was lamenting the lack of a clock that afflicted the precision of his observations of a lunar eclipse in 1091.” ([1461], page 68)

“The clocks common for mediaeval Europe were sundials, hourglasses, and water clocks, or *clepsydrae*. However, sundials only were of use when the weather was good, and the *clepsydrae* remained a scarcity” ([217], page 94). In the end of the IX century A.D., candles were widely used for timekeeping. The English King Alfred took them along on his journeys and ordered them to be burned one after the other ([217], page 94). The same manner of timekeeping was used in the XIII-XIV century, in the reign of Charles V, for instance.

“The monks kept count of time by the amount of holy book pages or psalms they could read in between two observations of the sky... For the majority, the main timekeeping medium was the tolling of the church bells” ([217], page 94). One is to bear in mind that astronomical observations require a chronometer that possesses a second hand, while we learn that “even after the discovery and the propagation of mechanical chronometers in Europe, they *had been lacking the minute hand for a long time*” ([217], page 95).

It has to be said that the ultra-sophisticated chronological Cabbala developed in the Middle Ages contradicts this imprecision of temporal observation. For instance:

“The very periods used for measuring time on Earth... acquire an entirely different duration... when

used for measuring the Biblical events... Augustine equalled every Genesis day to a millennium [! – A. F.], thus attempting to define the duration of the history of humankind.” ([217], pages 109-110)

Such an “inherent trait of the mediaeval historiography as its anachronistic propensity” is of importance to us.

“The past is described in the same categories as the contemporary epoch... the Biblical and the ancient characters wear mediaeval attire... a mediaeval moralist ascribes “courteousness” to the ancient Romans, which was a purely knightly virtue... The epochs of the Old and the New Testament are not put in a direct temporal sequence... The fact that the portals of mediaeval cathedrals portray Old Testament kings and patriarchs together with the ancient sages and evangelical characters unravels the anachronistic attitude to history like nothing else... In the end of the XI century the crusaders were certain they came to punish the actual executioners of the Saviour, and not their offspring.” ([217], pages 117-118)

This fact is significant enough, and we shall come back to it later on.

Modern historians base their observations on the Scaligerian chronology, believing that the mediaeval authors had “*attained a state of great confusion in what concerned both concepts and epochs*” due to their alleged ignorance, and that they had confused the ancient Biblical epoch with the Mediaeval one. Mediaeval painters, for instance, kept portraying the Biblical and the “ancient” characters in typically mediaeval costumes. However, another point of view is also viable, one that differs from the traditional “love for anachronisms” explanation. Namely, that all of the statements made by the mediaeval chronographers and artists may have reflected reality, and we consider them to be anachronistic because we follow the erroneous Scaligerian chronology.

The Scaligerian chronological version only managed to immortalize one mediaeval chronological concept out of many. Other versions previously co-existed with the consensual chronology.

For instance, it was assumed that the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation in the X-XIII century A.D. was the immediate descendant of the “ancient” Roman Empire that is alleged to have existed in the VI century A.D., according to the Scaligerian version

([270], vol. 1, page 16). Mark the repercussions of the discussion that appears very odd in our time: “Petrarch... made the statement that he was supposed to have based on a number of philological and psychological observations, that the privileges granted by Nero Caesar to the *House of Austrian Dukes* [in the XIII century A.D.! – A. F.] – were fake. It needed proof in those days” ([270], vol. 1, page 32).

For the modern historian [270], the thought that the “ancient” Caesar and Nero were the contemporaries of a mediaeval Austrian house of dukes that had only commenced its reign in 1273 A.D., that is, about 1200 years after Caesar and Nero – is naturally a preposterous one. However, as we see, the mediaeval opponents of Petrarch were of a different opinion, since it “needed proof” *qv* above.

E. Priester makes the following observation in re the same notorious documents: “All the interested parties were perfectly aware that the documents were blatant and shameless forgeries [such is the modern interpretation of the fact – A. F.], and nevertheless politely shut their eyes on this circumstance” ([691], page 26). An abnormally large number of “anachronisms” that transpose ancient events into the epoch of the XI-XIV century is contained in the mediaeval German chronicles and texts. Detailed reference may be obtained from [469].

The reader must be accustomed to believing the famous gladiator fights only occurred “in the distant ancient age”. This is not the case, however. V. Klassovsky in [389], having told us of the gladiator fights in the “ancient” Rome, proceeds to add that *these fights took place in the mediaeval Europe of the XIV century as well!* For instance, he mentions the gladiator fights in Naples around 1344 A.D., which were attended by Johanna of Naples and Andrew of Hungary ([389], page 212). These mediaeval fights *ended with the death of one of the fighters*, exactly the way they did in the “ancient” times ([389]).

7. THE CHRONOLOGY AND THE DATING OF BIBLICAL TEXTS

The datings of religious sources are virtually woven out of obscurity and confusion. The Biblical chronology and datings are of a very vague nature, since they

are based on the authority of late Mediaeval theologians. The historians write the following:

“The true history of the origins of the books comprising the New Testament also fails to concur with the one backed by the church... The order of the New Testament books [some of them – A. F.] that is used nowadays is the direct opposite of the one set by the ecclesial tradition... The real names of the authors of mediaeval books... remain unknown.” ([444], page 264)

As we shall learn, the consensual point of view about the Old Testament books *preceding* those of the New Testament also causes many doubts, and contradicts the results obtained by modern empirico-statistical dating methods. One should also consider the issue of the age of the Biblical manuscripts that have reached our time. They turn out to be of mediaeval origin.

“The oldest more or less complete copies of the [Greek] Bible are the manuscripts of Alexandria, Vatican, and Mt. Sinai... All three manuscripts are dated [palaeographically; that is, with such an ephemeral concept as handwriting style used as a basis – A. F.] to the second half of the IV century A.D. The codex language is Greek... The least is known about the Vatican codex – nobody knows how the artefact manifested in Vatican around 1475... The Alexandrian codex is known to have been given to the English king Charles I by the Patriarch Cyril Lucaris in 1628...” ([444], pages 267-268)

The codex of Mt. Sinai was only discovered in the XIX century by K. Tischendorf ([444], pages 268-270).

So, the three oldest codices of the Bible only surface after the XV century A.D. The reputation of their antiquity was created by the authority of K. Tischendorf, who had based his research on the style of handwriting. However, the very idea of palaeographical dating apparently *implies the existence of a known global chronology* of other documents and thus cannot be regarded as an independent dating method in any way. What we know for certain is that the history of these documents can be traced as far back as 1475 A.D.; in other words, no other more or less complete “ancient” Greek Bibles exist [444].

Among separate Biblical books, the oldest ones are considered to be those of Zechariah and Malachi, dated to the alleged VI century A.D., also palaeo-

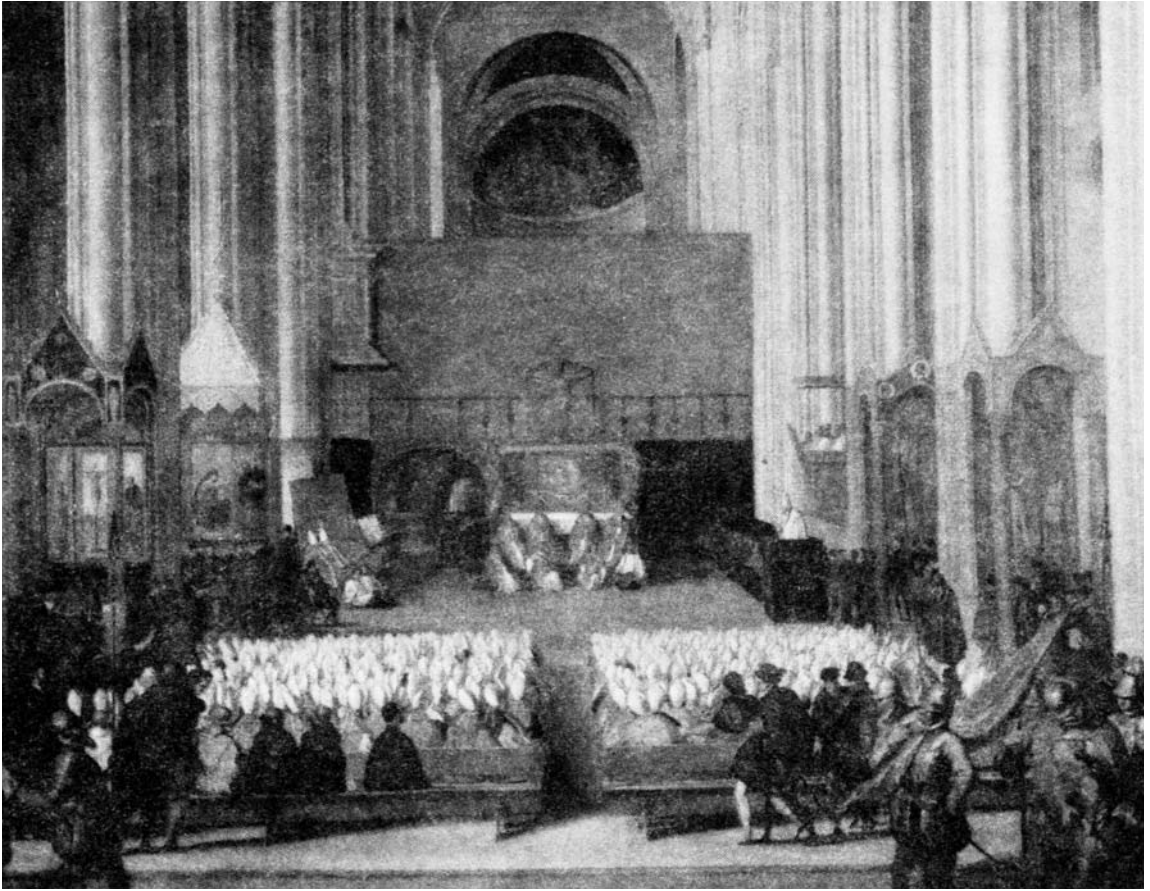


Fig. 1.33. The Trident Council (1545-1563). A painting by Titian. Kept in the Louvre, Paris. Taken from [328], page 238.

graphically ([444]). “The most ancient Biblical manuscripts are in Greek” ([444], page 270).

There are no Hebraic manuscripts of the Bible predating the IX century A.D. (!) in existence, although those of a more recent time, primarily the middle of the alleged XIII century A.D., are kept in many national libraries. The oldest Hebraic manuscript is a fragment of the Books of Prophets, and it is dated to 859 A.D. One of the two second oldest manuscripts “is dated to 916 A.D. and contains the Books of the Prophets; the other is dated to 1008 A.D. and contains the text of the Old Testament.” ([444], page 270)

However, the first manuscript was dated to 1228 by the scribe. The so-called Babylonian punctuation of letters given here allows this text to be dated by the Sel-

ucid Era, which gives us 916 A.D. However, there are no serious foundations for such a statement, and it is hence possible that the dating was given in years since Christ ([543], pp. 263-264), in which case the manuscript would belong to the XIII century and not the X.

The oldest Hebraic document containing the complete Old Testament can be ascribed to the alleged year 1008 A.D. ([444], page 270).

It is supposed that the Biblical canon was agreed upon by the Laodician Council in 363 A.D., but no edicts of this council remain in existence, and the same concerns the previous councils [765], page 148. The canon was really made official by the new Trident Council called in 1545, the epoch of the Reformation, and continued until 1563. In fig. 1.33 we can see a painting of one of the council’s sessions by Titian.

A great many books were destroyed by the edict of the Trident council – the ones considered apocryphal, namely, the *Chronicles of the Judaic and Israeli Kings* ([765]). *We shall never be able to read these books*, but there is one thing that we can be perfectly certain of. They were destroyed, since they had described history differently from the books approved by the winning faction of Scaligerite historians. We should emphasize that “there were a lot more apocryphal opuses, than those... certified canonical” ([471], page 76), and that most biblical datings are wholly dependent on palaeography, which means that they are based upon the a priori chronological knowledge of the Scaligerian school and would change automatically if a chronological paradigm shift occurred.

Let us give an important example: “In 1902 the Englishman Nash purchased a fragment of an Egyptian papyrus manuscript whose dating cannot be agreed upon by the scientists to this day” ([444], page 273). The final agreement was made that the text corresponds to the beginning of our era. Later on, “after the discovery of the Qumran Manuscripts, the comparison of the handwriting styles in both Nash’s papyrus and the Manuscripts allowed for the determination of a greater antiquity of the latter” ([444], pages 272-273). Thus, one papyrus fragment whose dating “cannot be agreed upon” pulls a whole lot of other documents after it. Nevertheless, the “dating of the [Qumran – A. F.] scrolls provoked major dispute amongst scientists (the dating range was given from the II century and until the epoch of the Crusades)” ([471], page 47).

The “early A.D.” dating is considered proven after 1962, when a radiocarbon research of the Qumran manuscripts was conducted. However, as we shall mention again later on, the radiocarbon method is really unsuitable for the dating of specimens whose age falls into the span of 2-3 millennia, since the ensuing datings cover too wide a time range (this may reach as wide a span as 1-2 thousand years, for specimens whose age reaches 1-2 thousand years).

Although [444] dated the Qumran Manuscripts to 68 A.D., the American historian S. Zeitlin categorically insists on “the *mediaeval* origin of these texts” ([444], page 27).

We shall give a more detailed account of matters concerning the Biblical manuscripts in CHRON6.

8. DIFFICULTIES AND CONTRADICTIONS ARISING FROM THE READING OF OLD TEXTS

8.1. How does one read a text written in consonants exclusively? The vocalization problem

The datings of other Biblical fragments that we possess today also need attentive additional analysis.

Attempts to read most of the old manuscripts, such as the Biblical and the Ancient Egyptian ones, often confront historians with severe difficulties.

“The first steps of our research into the primordial language of the Old Testament bring us to the fact of paramount importance, which is that written Hebrew neither had signs for vowels originally, nor any other signs to replace them... The books of the Old Testament were written in nothing but consonants.” ([765], page 155)

The situation is typical. Ancient Slavonic texts, for instance, also come as chains of consonants, often even lacking the vocalization symbols and separation of individual words from one another – just an endless stream of consonants.

Ancient Egyptian texts also contained nothing but consonants.

“The names of the [Egyptian – A. F.] kings... are rendered [in modern literature – A. F.] *in a perfectly arbitrary manner*, à la primary school textbook content... There is a plethora of significant variations that defy all attempts of classification, being a result of *arbitrary interpretation* [! – A. F.] that became tradition.” ([72], page 176)

It is possible that the scarcity and the high cost of writing materials made the ancient scribes extremely frugal, and the vowels were eliminated as a result.

“It is true that if we take a Hebraic Bible or a manuscript nowadays, we shall find a skeleton of consonants filled with dots and other signs that are supposed to refer to the missing vowels. Such signs were not included in the ancient Hebraic Bible... The books had been written in consonants exclusively, and filled with vowels by the readers to the best of their ability and in accordance with the apparent demands of common sense and oral tradition.” ([765], page 155)

Imagine how precise the kind of writing that con-

sisted of nothing but consonants would be today, when the combination BLD, for instance, could mean blood, bled, bold, build, boiled, bald, etc.; RVR could stand for river, rover, or raver, etc. The vocalization aleatory quotient in ancient Hebraic and other old languages is exceptionally high. Many consonant combinations may be vocalized in dozens of ways ([765]). Gesenius wrote that “it was easily understood how imperfect and unclear such writing method had been” (quoted in [765]).

T. F. Curtis also noted that “even for priests the meaning of the scriptures remained extremely doubtful and could only be understood with the aid of the tradition and its authority” (quoted in [765], p. 155). Robertson Smith adds that “the scholars had no other guide but the actual text, that was often ambiguous, and oral tradition. They had no grammatical rules to follow; the Hebraic that they wrote in often allowed for verbal constructions that were impossible in the ancient language” (quoted in [765], page 156). Scalligerian history considers this status quo to have prevailed for many centuries ([765]).

It is furthermore assumed that “this paucity of the Hebraic Bible was only remedied in the VII or VIII century of our era,” when the Massorets had processed the Bible and “added... symbols that stood for vowels, but they had no other guides but their own intuition and very fragmentary oral tradition, and this fact is known perfectly well to every expert in the Hebraic language” ([765], pages 156-157).

Driver points out that:

“Since... the Massorets and their efforts in the VII and VIII centuries, the Jews have started to protect their holy books with the utmost zeal and vigour when it had already been too late to mitigate... the damage done to them in any way. The result of this overzealous protection had been the immanetization of the distortions that had been made equal to the original text in authority.” (Text given by [765], page 157.)

“The common opinion used to be that the vowels were introduced to the Hebraic text by Ezra in the V century B.C.... When Levita and Capellus proved this wrong in the XVI and XVII century France, demonstrating that the vowels have only been introduced by the Massorets, the discovery made a great sensation in the entire Protestant Europe. Many were of the opinion that this new theory might lead to the complete de-

thronement of religion. If the vowels weren’t received in an Epiphany of divine inspiration, being merely a human creation, and a relatively recent one, at that, how could one rely on the text of the Holy Writ?... The debate that followed had been amongst the most heated in the history of the new Biblical criticism, and had carried on for over a century. It has finally ended when the veracity of the new opinion was acknowledged by everyone.” ([765], pages 157-158)

If such fierce disputes flared up around the Biblical vocalizations in the XVI-XVII century, could this mean these very vocalizations were *introduced very recently*? Could this have happened in the XV-XVI century? And since this vocalization version was far from the commonly accepted version, it had to encounter opposition, which may have been quite vehement. It was only much later that the Massoret deciphering of the Bible shifted (by Levita and Capellus?) into the VII-VIII century A.D. so as to give the Biblical text the authority of antiquity.

The situation with the Koran must have been similar. We are informed that:

“Arabic writing... becomes developed further in the middle of the VII century, when the first transcription of the Koran took place (651 A.D.). The additional diacritic marks on, above, or beneath the letter were introduced in the 2nd half of the VII century for differentiating between similarly written letters, for... vowels and doubled vowels.” ([485], page 41)

Other sources tell us that the vocalizations were only introduced in the second half of the VIII century by Al-Khalil Ibn Ahmed ([485], page 39). Could all of this activity have taken place in the XV-XVI century?

8.2. The sounds “R” and “L” were often confused in the Middle Ages

We shall give some direct evidence of the fact that the sounds “R” and “L” were often subject to flexion. Amsterdam, among others, is a city whose name was affected by such instability and was called Amster-dam, AmsteLdam, Amstelodami, etc. ([35], page XLI). We should mention another interesting fact here. Fig. 1.34 shows the title page of a book on navigation published in Amsterdam in 1625. The name of the city is already given as Amsterdam, the way it



Fig. 1.34. The title page from a book published in Amsterdam and dated 1625. The city is called AmsteRdam, spelt with an “R”. However, in the ancient engraving that we see on the same page, we see the name AmsteLRedam, with both sounds that were often mistaken for each other included (“R” and “L”). Taken from [1160], page 287.



Fig. 1.35. Close-up of a fragment of an old engraving, with Amsterdam spelt in a rather curious manner, “AmsteLRedam.” Taken from [1160], page 287.

is written today – however, the old engraving that one sees on the same page gives the *old* name in a rather peculiar spelling – *AmsteLRedam*, q.v. in fig. 1.35. Both consonants are present here, and a bizarre combination of sounds is achieved as a result. This reminds us that the names of many European towns and cities had remained unstable until fairly recently, when they became immanetized in the printing press epoch. Numerous other examples of this phenomenon are given below.

9. PROBLEMS IN THE SCALIGERIAN GEOGRAPHY OF BIBLICAL EVENTS

9.1. Archaeology and the Old Testament

The vocalizations of quotidian lexemes may not be all that important to our purposes, but the consonant sequences used for names of cities, countries, and rulers definitely are. Hundreds of different vocalizations were spawned, some of which were arbitrarily localized in the Middle East due to the hypothesis that binds Biblical events to that area exclusively.

The archaeologist Millar Burroughs expresses his unswerving trust in the correctness of the Scaligerian geography, writing that “in general... archaeological work doubtlessly gives one a very strong confidence in the dependability of the Biblical indications” (quoted in [444], page 16). One of the modern archaeological authorities, the American William Albright, wrote, albeit hazily, that “one should not doubt that archaeology [in reference to the excavations in modern Palestine – A. F.] confirms just how substantially historical the Old Testament tradition is” (quoted in [444], page 16; also see [1003], [1443]). However, Albright concedes that the situation with Biblical archaeology was so chaotic in the beginning of the 1919-1949 period that the varying views on chronological issues could not have reached any sort of convergence at all, and that “under those circumstances one really could not have used the archaeological data concerning Palestine for illustrating the Old Testament” (quoted in [444], page 16).

The one-time Director of the British Museum, Sir Frederic Kenyon, categorically insists that archaeology has refuted “the destructive criticism of the second half

of the XIX century”. W. Keller even published a book titled, suggestively enough, *And Yet the Bible is Right* ([1219]), which tries to convince the reader of the veracity of the Scaligerian interpretation of Biblical data.

However, here is some information from the eminent archaeologist L. Wright, also an avid supporter of the theory that the Scaligerian localizations and datings of the Biblical events were correct:

“The overwhelming majority of findings neither prove nor disprove anything; they fill the background and provide a setting for history... Unfortunately, many of the works that can be understood by the average reader have been written with excessive zeal and desire to prove the Bible correct. *The evidence is misused for making erroneous and semi-correct conclusions*” (quoted in [444], page 17).

The pioneers of archaeology in Mesopotamia were C. J. Rich, A. H. Layard, and P. E. Botta in the XIX century – however, in order to get their research subsidized, they had to advertise their findings in a sensational manner, associating their findings with Biblical towns in a rather arbitrary manner.

But the accumulation of material evidence resulted in a significant quandary. Actual facts show that none of the Old Testament books have concrete archaeological proof of their Scaligerian dating and localization. In the XX century L. Wooley, the prominent archaeologist, performed excavations of a town that he tried to identify as “the Biblical Ur.” However, it turned out that “unfortunately, one cannot give satisfactory chronological datings of the episodes [concerning the Biblical Abraham – A. F.] within the span of the second millennium of Middle Eastern history ([1484], [444], page 71).

The Scaligerian history insists that all the events concerning the Biblical patriarchs occurred precisely and exclusively on the territory of the modern Mesopotamia and Syria. Nevertheless, it is immediately acknowledged that “as to what concerns the identity of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, one can just reiterate that the information obtained as a result of the most fruitful excavations in Syria and Mesopotamia was extremely meagre, or *simply nonexistent*” ([1484], [444], page 77).

One might wonder just how justifiable it is to search for traces of the Biblical patriarchs in modern Mesopotamia.

Furthermore, Scaligerian history is of the opinion that all of the events involving the Biblical Abraham and Moses occurred on the territory of modern Egypt. It is evasively stated that:

“The historical intensity of this tradition is *not confirmed archaeologically*, but its historical plausibility is, together with an account of the circumstances that may have been the setting of the patriarchs’ biography.” ([444], page 80)

We are also warned that:

“One is to be cautious in one's use of cultural and social indications for dating purposes: *since we have the principal concepts in what regards the era of the patriarchs, one needs to possess a certain flexibility in the fixation of chronology.*” (quoted in [444], page 82)

As we shall soon see, this flexibility may stretch as far as hundreds and even thousands of years.

W. Keller proceeds to tell us that “Egypt remains indebted to the researchers. *In addition to the fact they found nothing about Joseph, neither documents nor any other traces of his time have been discovered*” [1219]. Egypt remains “in debt” in what concerns Moses as well ([444], page 91). In this case one may wonder yet again about the possibility of Biblical events having taken place in a different country – not necessarily bound to the territory of modern Egypt.

The archaeologist Albright, an avid supporter of the Scaligerian interpretation of the Bible, has nevertheless got to agree with the fact that “the previous concept of the Exodus to Haran from the Chaldaean Ur found *no archaeological evidence* except for the actual city” (quoted in [444], page 84).

Furthermore,

“It turned out that the very location of Mount Sinai is unknown. Another complication is that the Bible often states Mount Horeb to have been the place where the Revelation was given. If we are to take the Biblical description of the natural phenomena accompanying said procedure seriously, one has to presume the mountain to have been a volcano... The problem is that the mountain called Sinai nowadays *has never been a volcano.*” ([444], page 133)

Some archaeologists place Sinai in North Arabia, claiming that it was located in Midian, near Kadesh ([444], page 133). But *none of these mountains were volcanoes, either.*

The Bible says that “...the Lord rained upon

Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven” (Genesis 19:24). Scaligerian history locates this event somewhere in modern Mesopotamia. “The first idea that one gets in this respect is *the assumption of a volcanic eruption. But there are no volcanoes in this area*” ([444], page 86). It seems natural to search for these cities in some area that *does* have volcanoes. However, the search is still conducted in Mesopotamia with great effort and no results whatsoever. And finally a “solution” is reached: the southern part of the Dead Sea appears to conceal some debris resembling tree trunks under a 400 metre layer of very salty water of poor transparency ([444], page 86). This has sufficed for the American archaeologist D. Finnegan, as well as W. Keller after him, to claim that “the valley of Siddim,” together with the charred remains of both cities, had submerged ([444], page 86).

The Bible scholar and historian Martin Noth states explicitly that there is no reason to ascribe the destruction of the cities found by the archaeologists in Palestine, to the Israeli invasion in search of the so-called “Promised Land” ([1312]). As it was noted above, from the archaeological point of view the entire Scaligerian interpretation of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, the son of Nun, becomes suspended in thin air ([1312], [1486]). Are we conducting our search for the Biblical Promised Land in the correct place? Could the troops of Joshua have been predominantly active elsewhere?

It is further written that:

“*No archaeological proof of any Biblical report of the ‘Epoch of the Judges’ exists to this day.* All the Judges’ names contained in the Old Testament aren’t known from any other source *and weren’t found on any archaeological artefacts from either Palestine or any other country.* This concerns the names of the first kings Saul, David, and Solomon.” ([444], page 158)

Scaligerian history convinces us that Noah’s Ark had moored to Mount Ararat in the Caucasus. Werner Keller ([1219]) assures us that the Armenian village of Bayzit still keeps the legend of a shepherd who saw a large wooden vessel on the Mount. The Turkish expedition of 1833 mentions “some ship made of wood that was seen over the southern glacier.” Keller proceeds to tell us that in 1892 a certain Dr. Nuri was leading an expedition in search of the sources of the

Euphrates, and saw a fragment of a ship on the way back which was “filled with snow and dark red on the outside.” The Russian aviator officer Roskovitsky claimed to have seen the Ark’s remnants from his aeroplane during the First World War. Czar Nikolai the Second is supposed to have commanded an entire expedition there, which had not only seen, but also photographed, the remains of the Ark. The American historian and missionary Aaron Smith from Greenborough, an expert in the problem of the Great Deluge, wrote a history of Noah’s Ark mentioning 80 thousand publications on the topic. Finally, a scientific expedition was arranged. In 1951 Smith spent 12 days on top of Mount Ararat with 40 of his colleagues. They found nothing. Nevertheless, he made the following claim: “Even though we *failed to find so much as a trace of Noah*, my trust in the Biblical tale of the Deluge had only become firmer; we shall yet return” (quoted in [444]). In 1952 the expedition of Jean de Riquer obtained similar results. This somewhat anecdotal account here merely scratches the surface of the problem of geographical locations that is so acute for Scaligerian chronology, as it were.

Herbert Haag in his foreword to Cyrus Gordon’s *Historical Foundations of the Old Testament* credits the author with the following:

“His aim isn’t apologetic, which makes him quite unlike other authors that drown the book market in paperbacks attempting to “prove the Bible” by jumbling together all sorts of sensationalist “proof” received from ancient Oriental sources.” ([444], page 18)

Various museums, institutes, and universities send expeditions to the Middle East for “Biblical excavations.” Great sums of money are invested in such excavations, and a great many special societies and funds have been founded with the sole purpose of conducting archaeological research in the Scaligerian “Biblical Countries.” The first one of these institutions was the Research Fund of Palestine founded in 1865; currently there are about 20 similar organizations in existence ([444]). Among them we find the American Institute for Oriental Studies, the Jerusalem Affiliate of the Vatican Institute of Bible Studies, and the Israeli Research Society. No other region of the planet has been studied by archaeologists with such intensity as the Scaligerian “Biblical” territories. A great variety of literature is published on this subject

as well – special magazines, monographs, atlases and albums for the popularization of Biblical archaeology.

The Biblical topic is often given priority at the expense of other archaeological issues. The prominent Soviet historian who studied the antiquity, Academician V. V. Struve, has got the following to say about it:

“The excavations in Egypt and Babylonia were only of interest to the bourgeois science since they could be linked to Palestine. In order to find the funding needed for the excavations, the historians had to prove that an ancient copy of the Bible could be unearthed as a result of their research, or the sandals of Moses, mayhap, and then the monies were provided instantly.” ([444], page 44)

The following example is very representative. In the early XX century a tablet archive was found in the city of Umma, Mesopotamia. But since Umma isn’t mentioned in the Bible, and no enthusiastic entrepreneur could identify it as some Biblical town, the excavations in Umma were stopped, and the archives scattered without even being studied. The tablets were sold to Parisian collectors for one franc per piece ([444]).

“Archaeology as well as historical science in general can find no proof to the Biblical legend about the Egyptian slavery of the Jews” ([444], page 102). The Egyptologist Wilhelm Spielberg tells us that “what the Bible reports about the plight of Israel in Egypt isn’t any more of a historical fact than the accounts of Egyptian history related by Herodotus” (quoted in [444], page 103). V. Stade wrote that “anyway, it is clear that the research concerning the Pharaoh under whose rule Israel moved into Egypt and left it represents nothing but the juggling of names and dates void of all meaning” (quoted in [444], page 103). Let us repeat our question: could an altogether different country be described by the name of Egypt?

The Bible lists a great many geographical locations that the People of Israel visited during their 40 years of wandering after the Exodus from “Egypt.” The archaeologists still fail to find these locations where the Scaligerian history places their Biblical descriptions. Wright says that “few sites on the way to Mount Sinai can be identified with any degree of certainty” (quoted in [444], page 128). V. Stade wrote that: “checking the itinerary of Israel has as much sense as,

say, tracking the way of the Burgundians' return from King Etzel as described in the *Nibelungenlied*." The Egyptologist W. Spielberg quotes this statement, saying that "we can still sign under every word of Stade's" and that "the depiction of events following the Exodus, the listing of the sites where stops were made, the crossing of the desert – *all of this is fiction*" (quoted in [444], page 132). Many sites that were considered to have been on the itinerary of the Israelis were excavated thoroughly and intensively for a long time now. No traces have ever been found!

The Biblical account of the destruction of Jericho is well known. One of the Arabic settlements in the Middle East had been arbitrarily identified as the Biblical Jericho whose walls were destroyed by the sounds of the horn. The settlement has been subject to thorough excavations since the endeavours of Sellin, Watzinger, and Garstang in late XIX century. There were no results. In 1952 an Anglo-American archaeological expedition led by Kathleen Kenyon ventured to continue Garstang's research. No justifications for identifying the excavated town as Jericho have ever been found. Wright wrote that "the information received about Jericho was called disappointing, and it is true: not only is it hard to interpret the Biblical tale of Jericho, one cannot so much as trace the outline of the tradition's history... The Jericho issue is more problematic today than ever" (quoted in [444]).

The Bible says that after Jericho the Israelis destroyed the city of Ai. The site where this city was supposed to have been located according to the "calculations" made by the historians has also been subject to fundamental research. Yet again, the results have failed to satisfy. The German archaeologist and specialist in Biblical history Anton Jirku ([1213]) expresses his grief over the futility of the "Jericho" excavations, and proceeds to describe those of "Ai" as afflicted by "an even greater discrepancy between the report of the conquest of Ai that ensued and the results of the excavations" (quoted in [444], pages 145-151).

According to the Bible, the capital of Judaea in the reign of king Saul was the city of Gibeah. The historians have given birth to a hypothesis identifying it as the ruins excavated in the Tell el-Ful Hill six kilometres to the north of modern Jerusalem. However, it is conceded that "not a single inscription was found in town, and no clear evidence that the ruins belong

to Saul's palace or a tower that he built" ([444], page 158). But had Saul's palace really been built there?

CONCLUSION: Archaeological research shows that the books of the Old Testament have no archaeological proof of their localization and dating as suggested by the Scaligerian tradition. Thus, the entire "Mesopotamian" Biblical theory becomes questionable.

9.2. Archaeology and the New Testament

The traditional localization of the events described in the New Testament isn't in any better condition. The lack of archaeological proof of the Scaligerian localization of the New Testament is explained by the fact that "Jerusalem was destroyed in the years 66-73, and that the Jews had been forbidden... to come anywhere near the city" ([444], page 196). Scaligerian history is of the opinion that Jerusalem can be located at the settlement that the locals call El Kuds, whose site used to be perfectly barren before, also known as Aelia Capitolina. It was after the passage of some time that "the ancient Jerusalem" was reborn here. The "historical remnants of Biblical times" shown to tourists today, such as the Wailing Wall, etc., do not hold up to even minimal scientific criticism, in full absence of historical and archaeological proof.

Fig. 1.36 shows an ancient miniature, allegedly dating from 1470, that depicts the pillaging of Jerusalem by the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphane ([1485], pages 164, 165). As we can see, the mediaeval author of the miniature didn't hesitate to represent Jerusalem as a typically mediaeval town with Gothic buildings and towers, and all the warriors wearing mediaeval plate armour.

One must emphasise that other versions exist apart from the Scaligerian. The Catholic Church, for instance, has been claiming the "very house" that Virgin Mary had lived in and where "Archangel Gabriel appeared before her" to have been located in the Italian town of Loreto since the XIII century, which means that the Catholic version transfers a part of evangelical events to Italy. The earliest document concerning the "Loreto house" is the bull issued by Pope Urban VI dated to 1387. In 1891 Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical "in celebration of the 600 years of Loreto's Miracle." Thus, the "miracle" is dated to XIII century A.D. Historians mark that "Loreto remains a holy pilgrimage place for the Catholics to this day" ([970], p. 37).