

The XVIIIth Dynasty and Stratigraphy

In previous compositions Eric has proposed a chronology that puts the XVIIIth Dynasty in the 8th century. He has asked about the stratigraphy of such a proposal. I have been rather lazy in replying to this. Stratigraphy does have something to say about his proposal and I do not think he will like it.

In stratigraphy, the XVIIIth Dynasty strata outside Egypt are identified by the pottery of the Greek Mycenaeans. Mycenaean Late Helladic IIIA (LH IIIA) pottery was discovered at Akhetaton (el-Amarna) together with its famous letters. This time is generally referred to as Late Bronze IIA (LB IIA). The succeeding time, LB IIB, is characterized by LHIIIB. This is where conventional chronologists and Rohl put the XIXth Dynasty.

As I have pointed out before, in Velikovsky's scheme, the XVIIIth is advanced 475 years and the XIXth is advanced 630 years leaving a gap of about 150 years between them.

Rome

In the region of Rome, archaeologists found a Late Bronze stratum and called it Late Apennine. It ends about 1200 GAD. Conventionally this puts the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties in this stratum (see P. James, CoD). Then come the Sub Apennine, the Proto-Villanovan and the Villanovan strata. The Villanovan is identified as the time when the Latins founded Rome circa 750 GAD. Now the placement of the XIXth dynasty in the 7th century to align with the Hittite Empire makes Ramesses II et al come a century later than the Villanovan. Thus at Rome, there is a century plus two strata between the 7th century and the LB II and its XVIIIth Dynasty. Rohl places the XIXth in the Late Apennine; he keeps the two dynasties juxtaposed. For Eric's model to work the Apennine must be moved to a time later than the Villanovan.

The Philistine I and Ain Shems (Beth Shemesh)

The site of Beth Shemesh has Philistine pottery. At Philistine sites, there are no major gaps of three to five centuries as in Greek or Israelite sites. This makes them very useful to the revisionist. I will try to illustrate how the length of the Iron Age strata is extended after the end of the Late Bronze by 400 years. Thus dates circa 800-300 BC become 1200-300 BC of the conventional chronology.

Early in the exploration of the stratigraphy of Israel, Pythian-Adams excavated Ashkelon². He identified some dark red pebble-burnished ware just below the 4th century Hellenistic layers as belonging to the Babylonian and Persian eras. The early red pebble burnished ware overlapped with the crude painted Philistine ware. Prior to this was the Bichrome and Monochrome Mycenaean LH IIIc ware. Archaeologists had erroneously tied the Mycenaean pottery to the Egyptian 20th Dynasty and Ramesses III, whom previous Egyptologists had erroneously dated to the 12th century. Thus the strata, which lay above the Late Bronze and below the Hellenistic, have been stretched to cover the 900 years between 300 BC of the Hellenistic strata to 1200 BC. The Iron Age strata discovered at Ashkelon were about the same thickness as the 400-year-long Late Bronze strata. By this measure Iron Age strata should also be 400 years long - 700-300 BC.

At Beth Shemesh, Philistine pottery is found in Level III. Level II, which is the final Iron Age stratum at Beth Shemesh, is dated 1000-586 BC. It is subdivided into 3 substrata. Level IIa is dated 1000-950 BC; Level IIb is 950-825 BC and Level IIc is 825-586 BC. After Level IIc the site was abandoned until the Hellenistic era pottery of Level I.

There are a myriad of problems with these dates. According to Grant the latest artifacts of IIc come from Tomb 14³. Tomb 14 contained bronze bowls from the 6th century Persian era⁴, lamps from the 6th-4th century⁵, jugs from the 6th-4th century⁶, a small seal from the 6th century and juglets with long neck and everted rims paralleled at Tell Abu Hawam in the late 6th to early 4th century and at Samaria in the 5th century. The dates of these finds are not in accord with the dating of Level IIc, 825-586 BC. The author conjectured that the tomb artifacts should be dated sometime later than the destruction layer of Level IIc, in which the tomb itself was found⁷. Such a conjecture is without sound archaeological basis. Tomb 14 is a modestly rich tomb and there is no reason for the occupant to have been buried in a ghost town. Furthermore, in the Level IIc stratum there were silos larger than any except those of the Persian era⁸.

The best evidences for dating Level IIc are the seals of the 7th and 6th century⁹. There are similar seals at Samaria. Many of the names on these seals are found in the book of Ezra. This would indicate a 5th/6th century date. The pottery types in IIc are known to continue into the 6th century and cannot force a date earlier than 600 BC. There is nothing in this stratum that necessarily predates the Neo-Babylonian and Persian eras. Without the pressure to stretch the pottery chronology of the Iron II strata, a start date near the battle of Carchemish in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, 605 BC would fit the evidence very well. The end of the stratum could be anytime in the 5th century and 4th

century. There really is no definitive evidence to suggest the site was deserted in the Persian era.

Level IIb ends with a major destruction level. This can be dated to 7th century campaigns of either Necho II or Nebuchadnezzar II. A 'bit hilani' style building was found in Level IIa or IIb. This 'bit hilani' style architecture was Hittite and was brought to Israel by Assyrians in the late 8th and 7th century. A 'bit hilani' building was discovered in Level III of Megiddo, the Assyrian stratum¹⁰. In addition, the date for Level IIa/IIb can be determined from the presence of imported Cypriot juglets of the 7th /6th century¹¹. These juglets belong to the Cypro-archaic period whose dating is secured by reference to Greek chronology. These juglets date Levels IIa/IIb to the 7th century. The excavators dated Level II a/b to the 10th and 9th centuries.

Level IIa follows a major conflagration at the end of Level III. This could be the conflagration caused by the Assyrian invasion under King Sargon II or King Sennacherib in the late 8th century. Then level IIa could begin shortly after 720 BC. Thus, Level III with its Philistine pottery ends in the late 8th century. Grant dates the beginning of Level III 1200-1000 BC. He must do this because the Philistine pottery is a continuation of the Mycenaean pottery of the 13th century Level IV, which in turn is dated according to Egyptian chronology.

The earliest non-Mycenaean pottery in Level III belongs to Cypro-Geometric I. The dating of Cypro-Geometric pottery has long been controversial as James outlines¹². In his conclusion he states, "There seems to be only one valid solution: to lower the date for the end of the Cypro-Geometric to match the Tyrian evidence, and to reduce its length to the two centuries the quantity of archaeological remains known from the period would suggest¹³ ." His dates for the Cypro-Geometric I are 900-825 BC. Thus nothing precludes dating Level III from 825-725 BC.

The next stratum, Level IVb, at Beth Shemesh contained both LH IIIA and LH IIIB Mycenaean pottery. This is the time of the el-Amarna era. LH IIIB might be dated from 875-825 BC. Furthermore, Ashkelon strata show that Philistine strata exist down to the Hellenist era in cruder forms. Thus there actually is a connection between Philistine pottery and Ramesses III.

Philistine monochrome and bichrome existed just prior to the fall of the Israel to the Assyrians in the 8th century. The conventional chronology of sites containing Philistine pottery is continuously stretched by 400 years to cover the required Egyptian and Hellenistic dates.

The removal of the XIXth Dynasty to the 7th century places it in Level IIIb at Beth Shemesh. The XVIIIth Dynasty belongs, according to the pottery, in Level IVa. It is not possible therefore to keep the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties together under a Velikovsky-like revision of Ramesses II and his times.

Megiddo

Part of the confusion at Megiddo can be laid at the feet of biblical archaeologists, who mistakenly rushed to the conclusion that the Solomonic era is fixed to Level VA/IVB at Megiddo (palace 6000). This error was exposed by Kenyon, whose excavations at Samaria proved the era of Solomon precedes Megiddo VA/IVB if not Megiddo VI. The earlier Megiddo VII would contain the burn layer of Shishak in the Late Bronze as proposed by James and Rohl but Level VIII by me. But this is a stratigraphically far beyond the Level III where the stratum and the XIXth Dynasty lie.

Hissarlik

At Hissarlik the LB IIA with its LH IIIA pottery is contained mainly in the later layers of Level VI¹⁴. Level VIIa contains the LH IIIB and Level VII b contains the LH IIIC which parallels the Philistine pottery. In Level VIII contains the 7th century Greek pottery of the Archaic Period. Once the XIXth Dynasty is set in the 7th century it is separated from the XVIIIth Dynasty by two substantial strata, VIIa and VIIb. This era supposedly contains the Trojan War. The results of the excavations at Troy imply that Ramesses II is much later than the Achaeans not as the conventional theory, which places Ramesses II a century before the Trojan War. As an aside, the LH IIIB pottery at Pylos sits directly under the 7th century Late Geometric stratum. This shows that at some places LH IIIB actually parallels Philistine pottery.

Beth Shan

All the above sites there are strata imputed to the time of the XIXth Dynasty. No actual XIXth Dynasty material exists at these sites. At Beth Shan there are XIXth Dynasty scarabs and stela. In the late 1930's the site was excavated under Alan Rowe¹⁵. His first report labeled stratum V as the era of Ramesses II. It was dated 1300-1200 BC. The LH IIIA pottery was found in Level VIII together with XVIIIth Dynasty scarabs. *Prima Facie*, the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasty artifacts are found 3 strata apart. Later F. James reexamined the pottery and saw that it was Iron II¹⁶. Thus it was concluded that the stela had been thrown up from the lower level Stratum VII that contained LB IIB pottery. The system was restored.

Level VI was assigned to Ramesses III because some of the pottery was similar to pottery found at the Philistine pottery levels at other sites. Thus the

stratigraphic facts are always interpreted to fit the model of Egyptian chronology and the plain facts that the XIXth dynasty artifacts were found in Iron II levels was ignored. This problem also emerges at other sites where Ramesside material is actually found. Examples such as Byblos, Ugarit and Timna can be cited.

Conclusions

The stratigraphic connection of the XVIIIth to the XIXth Dynasty is difficult to defend. Rohl and James keep the connection of the dynasties by associating them with connected pottery. In Eric's model the movement of the XIXth Dynasty cannot be followed by a similar movement of the XVIIIth Dynasty. There is much 8th/ 7th century pottery that is dated by Greek and biblical chronology and it always appears later than the Mycenaean pottery of the Amarna era. This makes it impossible to put the XVIIIth Dynasty strata in the 8th century.

Below is a table of data of the different regions with conventional dates. In each the LB era ends after the end of the 18th Dynasty and the Iron Age Level starts before the revision placement of the 19th Dynasty - that is the Iron II in the 7th /early 6th century. In each case substantive strata exist between the two, proving that, at least in the revision placement of the 19th Dynasty, there is a substantial gap between the 18th and 19th Dynasties. If these dynasties are to follow one another this gap must be dealt with. WHAT HAPPENS TO THESE GAPS?

Location	Label LB	End Date LB	Label Iron	Date Iron	Separation
Rome	Late Apennine	1200 BC	Villanovan	750 BC	450
Beth Shemesh	Level IV	1300 BC	Level II	725 BC	575
Hissarlik	Level VI	1200 BC	Level VIII	700 BC	500
Beth Shan	Level VIII	1330 BC	Lower Level V	900 BC	430

Alan Montgomery

References

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5. Ibid, p. 142
6. Ibid, p. 142
7. Ibid, p. 144-45
8. Ibid, p. 70
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11. Grant, op. cit., p.140 n. 26.
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14. Rowe, A. 1930, The Topography and History of Beth Shean, Philadelphia.
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