IMPLICATIONS OF PALAEOLITHIC STRATIGRAPHY FOR CREATIONIST MODELS OF PREHISTORY

KEN GUENTER*

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Creationist models of world prehistory are usually enriched by geological considerations and are integrated with biology and anthropology. Claims concerning radiometric dating have been qualified or challenged. However, the archaeological data from before the Neolithic have hardly been noticed. In this article are outlined some of those data, and some implications for Creationist models.

1. The Continuous Sequence of the Flint Typology

All indications lead us to believe that there is an unbroken typology of flint tools that covers the entire Palaeolithic. This sequence continues on through the Mesolithic into the Neolithic and is then joined by pottery types which carry the sequence on to clearly historic times. Therefore, the Flood must have occurred prior to the Palaeolithic as there is no indication of any serious interruption.

The typological development of flint tools in the Palaeolithic of Palestine and much of the Near East follows several stages. In the earliest levels there are simple core tools and an assortment of crude flakes that have been reworked. The manufacture of tools on cores as choppers, picks or hand-axes carries on throughout the Lower Palaeolithic, first in the open camps and then in the earliest cave deposits.

The Middle Palaeolithic is dominated by more sophistocated flakes whose basic shape was determined before they were removed from the cores. These flakes are designated as Levallois flakes.

The Upper Palaeolithic is characterized by the proliferation of flint blades which were finished into an assortment of tools such as knives, points and scrapers.

These are only the dominant features of the typology in Palestine. Another dozen or so stages have been accepted as subdivisions of these three major phases.[1]

Now the point that must be reckoned with is that these stages are consecutive rather than parallel. The evidence is best illustrated at three major Paleolithic sites, Mt. Carmel,[2] Jabrud,[3] and the Judaean caves in the wadis south east of Bethlehem.[4] In each case we find an essentially similar typology represented and deposited under controlled conditions. At Mt. Carmel there were three caves side by side. The large Tabun cave was first occupied and filled. Then in turn each of the neighboring caves were filled. The same is true of the three rock shelters at Jabrud and the seven caves in Judaea. Never is the same typology found at more than one cave in each of the locations. In other words, a single population at each location seems to have filled a succession of caves, leaving behind three similar typologies.

2. The Parallel Development of Technique

Not only is there a typological sequence but there is also a sequence of techniques introduced for the purpose of flaking.

At first flakes were removed by the crude "block-on-block" technique; ie., another pebble was used to strike the core and remove flakes.[5] This was followed by the use of a "soft" hammer, such as hardwood, bone or antler, which provided for more control. The removed flakes became flatter and smoother. In the Middle Palaeolithic broad and triangular flakes were produced by the Levallois technique. Finally, in the Upper Palaeolithic fine blades were regularly removed from drum-shaped cores by the use of a hammer and punch.

This development of technique parallels the development of the typology and the increase in the number of functions for flint tools.

3. The Volume of Flint Deposits

The sheer number of flint tools found in various caves indicates that the occupants were there for considerably longer than Ussher's chronology would allow. For instance the Tuban Cave had over 16 meters of Lower Palaeolithic deposits[6] including 55,550 tools.[7] Ksar Akil had 12 meters of only Upper Palaeolithic deposits. The entire Palaeolithic deposit of Ksar Akil uncovered nearly two million worked flints and over one million animal bones.[8] The two caves may represent about half of the duration of the Palaeolithic in Palestine. There are both earlier and later stages. While it is impossible to derive a chronology from the rate of accumulation of debris and artifacts in a cave, the impressive mass of material from the Palaeolithic when added to the accumulations from the Neolithic suggest a minimum chronology of many hundreds of years and probably a duration of two or three thousand years for all of the cultures prior to the building of cities in about 3000 B.C.

4. The Widespread Occurrence of Palaeolithic Remains

It is noteworthy that the development of Palaeolithic typologies and techniques occurred over a broad area along roughly similar lines. Palaeolithic hand-axes and Levallois flakes have been found from England to China and South to the tip of Africa.[9]

This homogeneity is attributed by uniformitarianists to the painfully slow progress of prehistoric culture. As Biblical Creationists we may suggest that it was due to the unusual ages to which prehistoric men lived and to the uniformity of language prior to Babel. We do not require great ages for the Palaeolithic. Babel probably

*Mr. Ken Guenter teaches at the Caronport High School, and lectures in Old Testament and Ancient History at the Briercrest Bible Institute, Caronport, Saskatchewan, Canada.

dates from the period at the close of the Neolithic at which point archaeology reveals a sudden diversity in cultures world-wide, and also the creation of large structures such as ziggurats, pyramids and megaliths. If this is true then Babel represents the dispersion of only the early Mesopotamian population, but the disruption of language globally.

5. The Correlation of Palaeolithic Cultures With Climates, Fossil Assemblages and Geology

Palaeolithic remains stretch back through the recent glaciations, past the early radio-carbon dates around 50,000 B.P. to the period of great mountain building attributed to two million B.P. Middle Palaeolithic tools along the Palestinian coast are commonly associated with the middle terrace of the fossil beaches.[10] The most interesting Palaeolithic site from a geologic point of view is Ubeidiya on the southern tip of the shores of Galilee.[11] Since the Palaeolithic artifacts were left on the shores of the ancient lake there has been a major transgression of the lake to well inland of its present shoreline. This was followed by lava flows, the buckling of the shores and mountainside, and the erosion of the buckled surface to a gentle slope.[12] It is suggested by the geologists that these events occurred within the past 500,000 years.[13] From a Creationist viewpoint we are no doubt dealing with one of the earliest known sites from the period after the Flood.

Not only is the site likely to have important geologic implications but also the fossils speak of an unusually early time. Amongst the bones of the animals left with the flints were the remains of three-toed horses, sabre-toothed tigers, bears, and an abundance of hippopotami, deer and horses.[14]

While the integration of geologic data, fossil assemblages, climatic indications and flint typologies into a comprehensive outline of prehistory is still rather tentative, we can now see the potential for a Creationist reconstruction of the period after the Flood.

6. The Sequence of Radiocarbon Results

Radiocarbon dating has been strenuously attacked by Creationists because it stretches chronologies beyond what we consider to be reasonable limits. Nevertheless, C^{14} dates may still be of benefit to us. Though the presuppositions which require uniform atmospheric conditions and assume an ancient system may be responsible for inflated dates, the sequence of those dates is still of probable value. This is my approach to the C^{14} results for the various layers of the Mt. Carmel caves. With one minor exception, the sequence of the dates for the layers is in the same order as the typology of flints and as the stratigraphy would indicate.

Robert Whitelaw has suggested that generally carbon dates can be accepted as being in their true sequence, as argued above, and that they may also be divided into groups from before or after the Flood.[15] He also suggests that the true age of C^{14} dates from the time of the Flood is about 5,000 B.P.

There are however, problems connected with Whitelaw's chronology. First of all, it does not allow enough time for the Post-Flood cultures as argued above in point 3. Secondly, he has assigned a large number of dates taken from artifacts associated with human culture to the first 500 years after Creation. In other words, it is argued that cultural material from before the Flood is presently available. This is almost impossible if one holds to a catastrophic Flood as recently presented in the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*.[16] Also the archaeological data on the caves of Palaeolithic Palestine while providing C^{14} readings older than 45,000 B.P.[17], show no evidence of a catastrophic Flood disturbing the cave deposits. This would seem to invalidate Whitelaw's rather impressive reconstruction of prehistory.

By way of new directions, several possibilities present themselves. Perhaps C^{14} dates become hopelessly inaccurate, even for purposes of a sequence, the further back we go. Perhaps the sequence is true in a general sense but the given C^{14} age for artifacts from just after the Flood is nearer to 50,000 B.P. This is what the earliest readings from Palaeolithic Palestine would indicate. These, of course, could be recalibrated, as Whitelaw has suggested, to conform to a chronology more acceptable to Creationists. For instance, the C^{14} date of 50,000 B.P. might indicate a true age of c.4,000 B.C. or 8,000 B.C. for the Flood.

7. The Cultural Implications of the Flint Tools and Associated Remains

The earliest Stone Age remains do not come from caves. They are found in "open camps". At Ubeidiya, the earliest site in Palestine, we find men living on the shore. There they constructed a floor in Layer I-15.

> Professor Stekelis was of the opinion that the living floor was artificially made by the men who lived in the area. This theory is substantiated by the following observations. It is a uniform horizon of one or two pebbles thickness. The sharp-edged angular shape of the stones suggests that they were not carried by water action but brought deliberately and placed with the intention of making a surface. Further, the natural form of the local basalt bolders (especially those of large size) is of one convex and an opposite flatter side. These were chosen and laid with their flat surfaces upwards side by side with the flat-surfaced limestone blocks. In this way men constructed a flat, continuous, dry surface on the marshy bed. On top of this surface, according to Stekelis' theory, they built wind-breaks, shelters, or other installations. Between the area excavated in 1965 and that excavated in 1966, a two-meter wide strip of soil was found (Squares 67,68) without stones. This again supports the concept of an artificial origin of the living floor.[18]

Houses do not appear (again?) until the Neolithic; at least 500,000 years later by uniformitarian standards.

The site at Ubeidiya reveals an outstanding collection of hunted animals: catfish, amphibians, turtles, lizards, snakes, shrews, porcupines, wildcats, hyaenas, wolves, saber-toothed tigers, wild boars, three-toed horses, wild horses, deer, antelope, oxen, giraffes, rhinoceros, hippopotami and elephants.[19] It has been suggested that these were acquired by scavenging; but I suggest that is

impossible. In several years of hunting in Saskatchewan and Nigeria, both of which are fine deer zones, I have never seen a dead deer (let alone an edible one) that had not been shot or struck by highway traffic.

The tools at Ubeidiya are all very simple. Flaking techniques were elementary and the tools which resulted were suited to butchering or domestic uses. They could not be used as points for killing.

While these implications are problematic for evolutionists, they conform to creationist predictions. Noah lived in a tent and not a cave. His background included the technology to build a very large ship, and that his descendants were such great hunters comes as no surprise. They probably carried with them hunting and/or trapping techniques and equipment derived from their preflood civilization. The rough flint tools at Ubeidiya seem to be their early attempts at replacing tools that had been made of iron or bronze before the Flood. As the tools which survived the Flood wore out or were lost, many could not be replaced. For some, rough substitutes could be made, but in many cases they were simply forgotten and life degenerated as the stone technologies took over. The worst stages of decline seem to be reflected in the Middle Palaeolithic with its degenerate Neanderthal population. By the Upper Palaeolithic, man was adjusting well, using bone and antler as well as producing carefully controlled flints. The Upper Palaeolithic population is essentially modern and in some ways physically superior.

8. The Palaeolithic and Biblical Chronologies

The evidence for an extended series of cultures in the Palaeolithic when added to the data from the Mesolithic and Neolithic plus the Sumerian civilization that preceded Abraham, suggest a period lasting several thousand years following the Flood. Because this evidence is not well known it has largely been neglected; but we cannot honestly do that any more.

One alternative has been to try to compress the pre-Abrahamic history to fit into Ussher's chronology. This has been the thrust of Courville's work *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*. Unfortunately Courville is virtually without support in the academic community especially by those into whose specialty he is moving as an outsider. Even evangelical historians have criticized him.[20] As a Scientific Creationist, I'm convinced that there is a better way.

For various reasons we may argue that there are gaps in the genealogies of Genesis.[21] The gaps in questions are probably between Genesis 11:11,12 and verses 17 and 18 where we have sudden drops followed by periods of stability. We cannot stretch these gaps too far but even the King Lists of Sumer suggest many more generations.[22] As indicated above, we could expect a *minimum* chronology somewhat on the order of the following:

Abraham	c.2100 B.C.
Babel	c.3000 B.C.
The Neolithic	
The Palaeolithic	
The Flood	c.5000 B.C.
Creation	c.7000 B.C.

The duration of the Palaeolithic is based on the volume of data and an educated guess at the minimum length of time required for its accumulation.

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QUOTABLE QUOTE

Fifty years ago, it was noted that the ratios of cation concentrations in the extracellular fluids (blood, haemolymph, etc.) of different animals were similar to those of seawater, and it was proposed that these composition ratios had become fixed at the time when marine creatures first enclosed internal fluid media . . . this evolutionary theory must be rejected in favour of more direct considerations of cell requirements . . .

Metals in Biochemistry, by P.M. Harrison and R.J. Hoare. P. 69.