

Addendum to Biblical Origins: An Adopted Legacy

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFIRMATION

For those of you who are not familiar with my work, in my published title *Biblical Origins: An Adopted Legacy*, I spent my research focusing primarily on the Yahwist (J) of the Documentary Hypothesis in the hopes of finding a clearer date of composition for the author. My research has led me to a timeframe of 701 – 687 B.C.E.; during the Neo-Assyrian Period, under the monarch Sennacherib and the reign of Hezekiah of Judah. While I presented convincing pieces of evidence in my hypothesis, nothing was more convincing than the moment I had purchased and read Israel Finkelstein's and Neil Asher Silberman's archaeological research published in *The Bible Unearthed*. I acquired this excellent source of biblical archaeology shortly after publishing *Biblical Origins: An Adopted Legacy*. The following extract is taken from *The Bible Unearthed*.

The biblical text reveals some clear clues that can narrow down the time of its final composition. Take the repeated mention of camels, for instance. The stories of the patriarchs are packed with camels, usually herds of camels; but as in the story of Joseph's sale by his brothers into slavery (Genesis 37:25), camels are also described as beasts of burden used in caravan trade. We now know through archaeological research that camels were not domesticated as beasts of burden earlier than the late second millennium and were not widely used in the capacity in the ancient Near East until well after 1000 B.C.E. And an even more telling detail—the camel caravan carrying “gum, balm, and myrrh,” in the Joseph story—reveals an obvious familiarity with the main products of the lucrative Arabian trade that flourished under the supervision of the Assyrian empire in the eighth – seventh centuries B.C.E.

Indeed, excavations at the site of Tell Jemmeh in the souther coastal plain of Israel—a particularly important entrepôt on the main caravan route between Arabia and the Mediterranean—revealed a dramatic increase in the number of camel bones in the seventh century. The bones were almost exclusively of mature animals, suggesting that they were from traveling beasts of burden, not from locally raised herds (among which the bones of young animals would also be found). Indeed, precisely at this time, Assyrian sources describe camels being used as pack animals in caravans. It was only then that camels became a common enough feature of the landscape to be included as an incidental detail in a literary narrative.

The piece of text in which the authors are referring to is attributed to J. The use of camels as a beast of burden for transporting goods such as gum, balm and myrrh are dated no earlier than the late 8th to 7th centuries B.C.E. And the amount of camels used as a beast of burden in the Arabian trades had been dramatically increased around that same time period. The Assyrian texts confirm this. So there you have it, additional evidence confirming my proposed dating of J.